



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

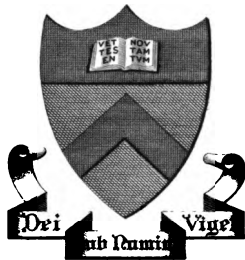
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



064787995

3704
36
386
v.2

Library of



Princeton University.

FROM THE BEQUEST OF
DR. THEODORE W. HUNT '65

THE
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

VOL. II.

THE
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

BY HENRY CURLING, ESQ.

Oh Heaven ! that one might read the book of fate ;
 Oh, if this were seen,
 The happiest youth,—viewing his progress through,
 What perils past, what crosses to ensue,—
 Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1843.

LONDON :
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

THE
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

This gentleman,
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt
In my behalf.

SHAKSPEARE.

I THREW myself on the bed, and notwithstanding the unpleasant thoughts which intruded themselves, soon fell into a deep slumber, from which I did not awake until aroused by a rap at my chamber door, and the entrance of my host.

"Come," said he, "I have allowed you to repose till the last moment; there is no time to spare. 'The early village cock hath thrice done salutation to the morn.'"

VOL. II.

B

870821

RECAP.
1.2

I jumped out of bed immediately, thrust my head into the wash-hand basin, made a hasty toilette, and we sallied forth together.

In any other circumstances, I should have felt inclined to smile at our present equipage. Myself, at this early hour, brushing the dew from the grass, and *nolens volens* without a particle of ill-humour or hostile feeling, going out, a complete greenhorn, to fight a duel with a practised hand, under guidance and patronage of a village Esculapius, who looked old enough to be my grandfather! The said 'Great Medicine' enveloped in an old military cloak of blue cloth, ornamented with what had once been a red collar, arm-holes having been cut subsequent to its build, for the purpose of riding comfortably on horseback in it; a shocking bad foraging cap upon his head, which, being pulled down over his ears, and nearly meeting the beforesaid stand-up collar, left nothing visible of the wearer's features but his fiery proboscis, and an occasional sparkle of his brilliant eye. Thus equipped, then, and with his pistol-case under one arm and his gold-headed cane in his other hand, the worthy Doctor strode forth, and I followed him. Determination was in his step

as he hurried on, and in his own mind he doubtless felt that he was doing as praiseworthy an act in thus accompanying a greenhorn to the field, and acting as guardian, both of his honour and safety, by the knowledge he had acquired in buffeting about the world, as though he had been attending a sick patient gratis, relieving a lame mendicant, enduring an hour's infliction of the village parson's saw, or indeed, doing any other recognised good action.

The old gentleman, after crossing the lawn, let himself out at a small gate, which admitted him from his kitchen-garden into the meadows leading to his beloved farm. Even under present circumstances, he could not help rapping out sundry deep-mouthed curses against his incorrigible serving-man, Elliot, for not being up, and at his work with the sun.

We crossed the meadow adjoining, and entering a plantation of firs, proceeded along it, till we came upon the farm.

"Heaven's breath smells woingly here: the air is delicate," said the Doctor, stopping, as we reached the appointed ground. "We are, you see, the first a-field, and down yonder at the homestead, where you hear the cock crowing, there is as

yet no signs of the business of life. 'Man's o'er-laboured sense repairs itself by rest.' This is our ground, and right glad am I that we have reached it, for this cloak and these pistols have made me sweat like a day-labourer. Look out, Mr. Blount !—pshaw ! man, not in the direction we have just come. Look towards the road leading to Marston Hall ; you've looked that way often enough before to-day, or we should scarcely be here at this hour, and on such an errand."

Saying this, the Doctor put down his pistol-case upon the grass, and quietly seating himself upon it, took out his cigar-case, struck a light, and proceeded to ignite his Havannah.

"Oh ! solace of the wounded heart !" he began ;
"my excellent cigar !—

Sublime tobacco, which from east to west,
Cheers the tar's labour, and the Turkman's rest."

Doubtless he would have treated himself and me to a whole litany upon his favourite weed, had I not announced that our opponents were approaching ; and accordingly Lord Hardenbrass, and his friend Major Belcour, having dismounted, and secured their horses, quickly joined us.

A belt of firs hid the meadows in which we were from view of the road, so that the ground was well-chosen in all respects.

The Doctor, spectacles on nose, was busied in taking out and preparing his instruments, as they came up. Both raised their hats, and I returned their salutation. The old gentleman, however, merely bending his head, so as to get a glimpse at them over his glasses, bade them good morning, without discontinuing his employment. He was, perhaps, as good a specimen of what is termed 'a cool hand' as could well be met with. My opponent's second, meanwhile, produced and made ready his weapons, and we were then, without further circumstance, posted on our different stations, having the benefit of the usual allowance of paces between us.

Not a word, meanwhile, had been addressed by Lord Hardenbrass either to myself or friend. He was apparently, in his own conceit, too great, and too much injured, to honour either of us by giving even the salutation of the morn. He spoke a word or two to his second, after taking his ground, and looked me steadily in the face.

"Keep your eye firmly fixed upon him," whispered the Doctor, as he left my side.

The pistols were now in our hands, and we awaited the signal. It was quickly given, and we both fired. I believe I owe my life to my second's advice, and the unflinching look I kept upon my adversary's eye. His ball passed through my neck-handkerchief, and slightly wounded my neck, whilst mine went wide of the mark.

Major Belcour and Dr. Misaubin immediately approached. The former was desired by his principal, to ask me if I still intended to persevere in my attentions at the Hall. I denied his right to propose the question.

"Give me the other pistol, Major Belcour," said his Lordship, "the affair must go on, I see."

"I see nothing of the sort, Major Belcour," said the Doctor. "I conceive Mr. Blount has given reasonable satisfaction here. An exchange of shots is all that was necessary in such a case. The field is as open for one candidate as the other. The affair, my Lord, permit me to suggest, with all deference, is now entirely out of your hands. The lady herself is the better per-

son to engage with, whichever of the swains she most affects. ‘*Utrum horum mavis accipe,*’ as we used to say at Westminster.”

“Your ideas upon the subject,” returned his Lordship, with some warmth, “are as impertinent as you yourself are ungentlemanlike in mentioning the lady, as you have this moment done; for which you may consider yourself properly chastised, without my degrading myself by the infliction.”

“Now, the red pestilence strike thee for an inordinate ass!” said the old gentleman, in violent rage. “By Heaven! you shall answer that affront, ere you leave this ground. Major Belzebub, your principal is unsatisfied, is he?”

“He is, Sir,” returned the Major, haughtily.

“Take your weapon, Mr. Blount,” said the Doctor, stepping to me, and handing the pistol. “I will indulge ‘this courageous captain of compliments,’ for once. I give the signal this time, Major Belcour. Ready. One, two, three,” shouted the old man, without stirring a foot from my side, or giving his brother second time to get out of the way either.

Although this was not quite regular, we both obeyed the signal, fired, and again were

both unhurt. Again I owed the Doctor a life.

"Are you touched this time," said he to me.
"Come, it's lucky you are not."

"His Lordship insists upon going on," said the Major. "He is still unsatisfied."

"Is he, Sir?" returned the old gentleman, proceeding with alacrity, to load the pistols again. "Then, well may I,—as the poor Lieutenant of Sterne has it. He *shall* be indulged in another shot, Major Belcour," he continued, soon as he had prepared the weapons; "but this time, if he shoot at all, it must be at me, Sir. I will not permit this youth here to be fired at, like a pigeon, for his peculiar satisfaction any longer. Mr. Blount," he continued, turning to me, "a small exchange of civilities makes life pass agreeably, as my Lord Ogleby has it. Do you now perform that office for me which I have just done for you. Major Belcour, I expect satisfaction from that walking ferocity there, for the gratuitous insult he has just conferred upon me. I will not permit your principal to fire another shot at my friend, 'that's the humour of it.' If you still continue his Lordship's second in this second business,

place your man. Here is my ground ; I stand here for justice."

The Major and his friend consulted for a few minutes, and at length Lord Hardenbrass, taking his stand where he had before fired from, the Doctor remaining upon my former station, we stepped aside, after agreeing upon the signal, which the Major this time gave, and duel number two proceeded.

Unhappily, both shots took effect, and quick almost as the reports of their weapons, both principals lay sprawling upon the greensward. I gazed for an instant with dismay from one to the other, and then hastening to Dr. Mis-aubin, knelt down, and raised him in a sitting posture.

"My excellent young friend," said he, with difficulty, "I am fairly sped this bout. I have it, and that soundly too."

I was so deadly shocked and confounded at this catastrophe and misfortune to my friend, who, indeed, I had begun to love with almost filial affection, that I could scarcely speak to him ; and forgot, for the moment, that there was another sufferer on the ground, only a few paces from me.

"Let me down again," screamed the Doctor. "For Heaven's sake, lay me down easily. A curse upon the man, he has cut me in half! 'Is he gone, and hath nothing,' as Mercutio says. Oh, bullets and triggers, my back bone is broken in twain!" The pain was now so great, that together with loss of blood, he fainted in my arms.

"Help, Major Belcour, help," I cried, starting up, and running to him, "unless we get some assistance quickly, I fear my friend will die, if he is not already gone."

"We are in a scrape here," said the Major, who, on one knee, was supporting Lord Hardenbrass.—My friend is also, I fear, mortally wounded. Doctor Misaubin insisted last night, that no surgeon was necessary on the ground, as he himself was sufficient for the occasion; doubtless, little suspecting, that by becoming a principal himself, he would leave us in such a dilemma as this."

"Do me the favour to look in the direction of the farm, and see if you can observe any of the labourers about in the field."

As I could see no one near, he advised me to run immediately to the farm-yard, get assistance,

and at the same time dispatch a messenger for the village surgeon.

Accordingly I flew back to the Doctor, who I perceived was now recovering from his swoon, and placing his old cloak under his head by way of pillow, made off, fast as I could run towards the farm.

I flew like a Pawnee Indian across the fields, taking hedge and ditch in my progress, till I reached the farm-yard. With one bound I cleared the palings, and was seized by the Doctor's mastiff, which happened to be kennelled just on the spot where I alighted, and it required all my efforts to prevent him from throttling me. The fellow pistol to the one which Dr. Misaubin had fired with, was in my hand, which I was unconscious of, until I found myself defending my life with it against this powerful brute, by thrusting the barrel into his jaws. Despite my efforts, however, to get free from him, the faithful animal held me fast, and I found it impossible to extricate myself without destroying him.

Cocking, therefore, the pistol, I discharged it down his savage throat.

The noise of my encounter with the mastiff

aroused some of the labourers of the farm, who hastening to the spot, instantly surrounded me. Seeing their guardian in the agonies of death, and a man armed and looking wildly, rising conqueror from the encounter, they made at me with the weapons which they had snatched up on the alarm, and I found myself accordingly, delivered from one action only to commence upon another. Assailing me with imprecations and blows, they would fain have beaten me to the earth first, and then inquired into the justice of such measure, after I was unable to explain the cause of my intrusion. It was in vain for me to cry out to them to desist. They out-tongued my complaints, and taking me I suppose, for a burglar or a madman just escaped from his keepers, with a deadly weapon in his gripe, they seemed determined to make their capture in the safest way to themselves, by rendering me incapable of doing more mischief. Whilst I fought an unequal combat, therefore, and was upon the point of being overpowered by these rustic barbarians, the bailiff of the Doctor's villa, thrusting his red nightcap from the window, effected a cessation in the efforts of his ploughmen, and saved me

from the disgrace of being vanquished by the cudgels and pitchforks in their unknightly hands. Quickly explaining to the farmer, my reason for coming, and the dangerous situation of his master, after despatching a messenger for Dr. Stirret, we procured a mattress and blankets, and returned as fast as we could to the scene of the unhappy duel.

We found matters there bad enough. The Doctor was as severely wounded as he had at first proclaimed, and his agony was so great, that it was with difficulty we succeeded in placing him on the mattress we had brought. Lord Hardenbrass was also apparently mortally hurt. The ball having gone through his stomach, his second feared that he would die on the ground. With some trouble we managed to carry my poor friend, in a faintly state, to the farm-house. Lord Hardenbrass, however, refused to be conveyed any where but to the Hall. "I will perish," said he, "where I am, Major Belcour, or be conveyed to Marston Hall. Tell me not, Sir," he continued, "about assistance sent for to this man's farm. If I am doomed to die by the hand of a village apothecary, methinks the disgrace of such a duel is

quite infliction enough, without breathing my last breath under shelter of his roof. It was by your advice I consented to grant this person satisfaction, and behold the result."

"But, my dear Lord," urged the Major; "consider, it is merely till a conveyance can be sent for you; and, in order that your wound (which I trust is not so bad as you think), may be looked to as speedily as possible, that I ask it."

"Major Belcour," returned the wounded noble, "I beg, Sir, you will not further irritate me at this time. Favour me by either directing these men to convey me to Marston Hall, or send one of them off speedily for a carriage from the village of Woodville. Cursed misfortune," he continued, "to be thus pinked by a crack-brained surgeon of a country town! I could die, Major, with perfect satisfaction to myself, had I been cut down by the commonest trooper in the field; but to be thus brought low by an itinerant quacksalver! Oh, it's too ridiculous. It really almost makes me laugh to think of."

So saying, the noble Lord fell back into the arms of his second, in a violent fit of hysterical laughter, and fainted.

CHAPTER II.

Oh, Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead ;
That gallant spirit hath aspir'd the clouds.

SHAKSPERE.

It happened, luckily, that a post chaise, which Doctor Misaubin had arranged to have in the road that morning in case of accident, and which he had ordered from the Shin of Beef and Gridiron (as if for the purpose of conveying him on a visit of some distance to a patient), at this moment hove in sight, and I immediately informed Major Belcour of its approach. We, therefore, with the assistance of two or three of the gaping and affrighted bumpkins around, carried Lord Hardenbrass across the meadow into the road, and placing him in it, he was supported in the arms of his second, and conveyed gently towards the Hall.

As for me I felt, as usual, the chief agitator

and cause of this misery and bloodshed, and yet, as it were, quite independent of it all. My best friend, who had apparently sprung up in the last few hours, as adviser and guardian to my future ill-omened career, was hurt almost to death in my cause, and my foe was in as bad a condition. It was no piece of good fortune, I considered, that the bullet of my antagonist had been directed from my own heart into the body of another ; as I conceived it a most unlucky chance which had hindered the missile from ending the career of one so apparently useless and unlucky. I, the exciting cause, and by whose actions these disasters had come about, forlorn and miserable, seemed to have no more to do with them now all had happened, than the horned beast which quietly chewed the cud in the meadow beside me.

It was no little aggravation to my feelings, that a comparative stranger had taken my quarrel into his own hands, in spite of all my efforts to persuade him that he had nothing to do with its active part ; and, had apparently because he had advocated my cause, been shot down at my feet, the moment he entered upon my quarrel. I felt that I was a culprit without crime, a fellow

by the hand of nature, quoted and signed to be unfortunate in my career, and shed desolation upon all connected with me.

As I was left alone in the field, I walked off to the farm, in order to see after my unfortunate friend, whose wound I dreaded to hear a report of. Farmer Blackthorne had ordered him to be placed upon his own bed; and Doctor Stirret arriving just as I reached the cottage, proceeded to examine his hurt. It was one of those curious perforations which sometimes happen in gun-shot wounds. The ball had entered the right side, traversing round till it lodged upon the spine. The torture of such hurt is generally most excruciating, and the screams of the sufferer were so dreadful, as to drive me during the surgeon's examination from the room. Alas! I cannot bear to dwell upon the remembrance of my poor friend's suffering in my cause; suffice it, that from the time of the duel up to the hour of his death, I never left him.

For nearly a week his sufferings were dreadful, and the cries he uttered, day and night, still ring in my ears. They pierced me then like daggers driven into my own flesh; and

frequently in the dead of night methinks I hear them reproaching me, as it were, for being the cause of so good a man's suffering and death. At the end of five days a cessation of pain took place, and I consented to relinquish, for a few hours, my post behind his pillow, thinking he was about to recover. Mortification, however, had taken place, and my poor friend died, when I imagined all my care was about to be rewarded with success. Both himself and his medical friend, knew that the cessation of suffering was but a short prelude to the ending of mortality.

As soon as he began to feel himself somewhat easier, his spirit and good humour returned, and during the night he called me to him, and told me that all would soon be over.

"Thou art a good youth," said he. "In my career of science, I have been used to read men rapidly, and have seldom been deceived. I will yield to no man, not even to the great Gustavus, the Lion of the North, in penetrating into the dispositions of mankind, from a few hours' acquaintance. The hurry of the march,—the toil of the war,—the misery of the hospital,—the imminent deadly breach,—the sufferance

under surgery;—all have taught me to know man well. You are a good youth, I repeat, and of a disposition too amiable to thrive in this world of rascality. Had I time, I would read you a sermon of advice; but I feel that I have not, and indeed it would be useless. ‘O Heaven! that one might read the book of fate.’

How chances mock,
And changes fill the cup of alteration
With divers liquors! O, if this were seen,
The happiest youth,—viewing his progress through,
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,—
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.

“In some sort I am prepared for death, and I die content, my dear young friend, that I have been able to preserve your life by my interference. You have relieved me too from a great weight, by saying that my antagonist is likely to recover. A little suffering will do that man good, and I am not sorry that I have chastised him a trifle. His intentions towards you I saw, were improper; it was ‘miching Mallecho,’ as Hamlet says; ‘it meant mischief.’ ”

I remained with him as long as he breathed;

for the last few hours of his life he was motionless, and unable to speak. As his eye grew dim and glassy with the near approach of death, I saw it roll round the apartment and fix upon the water jug, so I arose and moistened his lips. He glanced at me to thank me, and then closing his eyes, soon afterwards ceased to breathe.

Besides myself, there was another individual who, half broken-hearted, watched the progress of the poor old gentleman's decease;—and that individual was his eccentric old gardener, Frederick Elliot. The calamity seemed to have completely unsettled his wits; and as soon as he heard of the dangerous state of his master, to whom, notwithstanding the warfare they had so long lived in, he bore the truest affection, he strode over to the farm-house, and walking into the kitchen, thrust himself into a chair between the dresser and a table, near the casement. Wedged in this place, he sat, and listened to the agonized screams of his master, in a state of absolute torture. In fact, he suffered with him he heard suffer; but nothing could persuade him to go into the room where he was dying.

In this frame of mind, the eccentric serving-man arrived every morning at day-break at the farm, and rushed home to the village late at night. He spoke little to any one, but echoed his master's groans, and took scarcely anything by way of food, but an occasional crust of bread, washed down with large draughts of farmer Blackthorne's strong ale; which the old dame, his wife, constantly supplied him with. When he ascertained that his master had breathed his last, he rose from his accustomed seat, seized upon the oaken clump with which he always walked abroad, and without a word to any one present, left the house, and returned to his old employment of digging in his garden.

Lord Hardenbrass, meanwhile, contrary to expectation, I found was recovering from his severe and dangerous wound, and (although the bullet had passed through his body) was pronounced by Dr. Stirret, for the present, out of danger. This was so far satisfactory to me; but the death-bed scene I had witnessed, and my incessant attendance upon my poor friend, completely knocked me up, and I suddenly found myself seriously unwell. My nerves, in-

deed, had received a severe shock; and at the end of a couple of days I was in the height of a violent fever.

During the violence of my malady I was for some time delirious, and unconscious of what passed; but with Dame Blackthorne's care, and Dr. Stirret's skill, I at length began to recover.

Much had in the meantime taken place, whilst I had been thus an inmate of Nonsuch Farm. My delinquency in having mistated the occurrence of Sir Walter Villeroy's death, was divulged by my evil genius the scoundrel poacher, greatly to the astonishment of Lord Marston, the grief of Miss Villeroy, and the delight of my opponent and rival.

The Duchess of Hurricane exulted in her penetration, as she averred that from the first moment of looking upon my unhappy visage, she had set it down in her own mind that I was good for nothing. There was something about me which, as Shallow says, she could "never away with," notwithstanding all my plausibility, hauteur, and (she was pleased to add) distinguished appearance.

The noble-hearted Lady de Clifford, how-

ever, as I afterwards learnt, remained fast my friend. She combatted the opinions of all my enemies, Mrs. Allworthy told me, during a visit which I subsequently paid that old lady. Nay, she had even sent each day, during my illness, to make inquiry after my health, setting at nought the offended dignity of her austere mamma.

"To me, Madam," she said, "he has rendered a service, for which I can never be sufficiently grateful. So much, indeed, do I owe to his gallantry in defending me from the most horrible of deaths, that I shall never be able to repay the obligation. Besides," she continued, "I know you are all quite wrong in your feeling towards this young man. None but the ill disposed themselves can really be the enemies of Mr. Blount when they know him. In my opinion, his generosity and fine feeling, his honour and chivalrous disposition, quite counterbalance the violence of his temper and his other faults."

The Duchess was highly indignant at these sallies of her daughter, who she immediately began to suspect entertained feelings of partiality for one whom she defended so obstinately.

"Mrs. Allworthy must have been mad," she

muttered, as she left the room in search of that lady, "to have permitted this intimacy to grow, and through which all these disasters have happened."

The Duke, also, who was present at Marston during the illness of Lord Hardenbrass, decided, from all that had transpired, that I had neither truth nor honour ; and the circumstance of my being, as he heard, disinherited, and expelled my father's roof, was quite enough for him. He desired his high-spirited daughter never again to mention my name in his presence.

Miss Villeroy, meanwhile, who had kept her chamber since this unlucky duel, and who had been persuaded by the Duchess and her two guardians to look upon me with abhorrence and dislike, as the virtual murderer of her beloved father, now signified her desire to leave the neighbourhood immediately, and travel abroad. Amidst the classic remains, and under the bright and sunny skies of Italy, therefore, she was persuaded to forget the mishaps and misfortunes of Ratcliffe Blount.

CHAPTER III.

— As in the sweetest bud
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

SHAKSPERE.

MISS ALLWORTHY I have not made much mention of since the unlucky serenade. From the circumstances attending that affair, the good old lady might with reason have entertained feelings of hostility towards me. The Duchess, indeed, had expressed her displeasure to her in no measured terms for having permitted the Lady de Clifford her daughter, and the heiress of Marston, to ride about the country in her absence, as she affirmed, more like the daughters of some homespun farmer than people of condition.

The poor old lady, who bore in her countenance the consequences of her error, if so it was, could ill brook the rebuke of her haughty rela-

tive; and telling the Duchess that her ideas were unbecoming one of her high rank, took leave of the party; and, bidding Miss Villeroy beware how she broke the heart of a worthy man, for the sake or at the bidding of a hot-headed colonel of dragoons, ordered her carriage, and returned home.

Whilst I remained at Nonsuch Farm, I received a letter from her, desiring to see me as soon as I found myself in travelling condition; and from her I learnt the matter I have just related. Dr. Stirret had also informed me, now that I was able to talk on matters of business, that my father and his party had set off for the continent about a fortnight after our disastrous field day. "To-morrow morning," said he, "I will talk further with, and give you some letters I have received here for you. This evening we have done as much as the state of your health will bear; meanwhile, I shall commend you to your repose.'

Accordingly the next morning she delivered me a packet of letters, two of which had been brought for me from the Grange, two had come from Marston Hall, and one was an anonymous production. The two from the Grange were

important. One bore upon its envelope those (to a beginner) formidable-looking printed characters, '*On His Majesty's Service.*' The other was from my father. The Horse-guard epistle named me as recommended to his Majesty for a Cornetcy in the — Hussars; and the one from my father was an accompaniment thereto, ordering me to make my way up to London, to the house of a relative I had never seen, giving me likewise directions about my fit out, and orders to join at the expiration of the two months granted for preparation, without soliciting any more leave. The letter contained also a cheque for two hundred pounds, and signified his intention of being shortly in London. The letters from the Hall were, however, the first opened, as I knew the hand-writing of both. The first was from Miss Villeroy, and contained this passage:

“Indeed, after all that has transpired, I could not leave England without either seeing or writing to you. Heaven knows that before I discovered the dreadful truth regarding my poor father's death, I could have suffered all the

odium and displeasure of my relatives, rather than have caused you the slightest unhappiness ; but when to that discovery is added also the knowledge of your having professed to feel for my cousin the same sentiments of regard you so oft have sworn you felt towards me and me alone, how can I feel anything but sorrow for your treachery, and contempt for all mankind ? Believe me, I grieve for your situation, and know that this last unhappy business was not of your seeking. It was, however, the most unfortunate thing that could have happened. Much as I now feel dependent upon the advice and support of my relatives and guardian, I should have held fast to my promise to you ; but as the case now stands, I feel myself absolved from all, and have never dared to acquaint them that there has been more than friendship between us.

“ For ever, then, farewell ; and may you be blessed in life, and far happier than I can ever hope to be ! We shall never meet again, with my consent, in this world ; but that I can ever forget the man whom my fancy pictured and my thoughts loved to contemplate, is a vain wish ;

nay, I fear still that as your favourite song has it,

‘I had rather bear whole years of pain,
Than e’en for one short hour forget thee.’ ”

The one from Lady Constance ran something thus:—

“I do not suppose that under any circumstances I could be justified in thus writing. But the feeling I shall bear with me to other lands, from having done so, will be that of satisfaction, even though the universal world should censure. I go shortly with Miss Villeroy to Rome, at her particular request; though, she well knows, I have no great will to the journey. We may, perhaps, never meet again; but, oh! Mr. Blount, think not I can ever forget how deeply I am indebted to you, and greatly I feel the want of proper feeling towards you which exists amongst all here. The knowledge, too, that you have borne more than your proud spirit could brook for mine and Isabella’s sake, merits both our thanks.

“Isabella has ever forborne to speak her sentiments, but I have discovered there has been

more between you than I knew of, ere I went to Scotland, which I would you had not thus concealed. But I will not here further touch upon the subject. I shall now, I fear, never hear of you, even slightly, as I used to do when you visited at the Hall during my absence; and now these unhappy events have happened, and we are to be so far away, I doubt not but that you will soon forget your sometime friends here. 'Twill be best so; and in the stirring events and amusements of man's career, it is, I hope, easy to do so. Not so with woman.—Farewell !”

It was evident to me, from these epistles, that the ladies had compared notes; and that the smart things I had felt it my duty to give utterance to whilst the companion of Lady Constance, had been misconstrued by Miss Villeroy; which, together with my delinquency in regard to her father's death, my unhappy serenade, and disastrous duel, had made shipwreck of all my present hopes. I had set a barrier between her and myself, over which, at present, there was no approach.

The anonymous production, however, was the

one which most puzzled me. It was in a female hand, and breathed the most devoted attachment. As it alluded to passages which had lately passed at my own home, and blamed my new relation as driving me from my father's roof, it must have been written by some person well acquainted with our family affairs ; but as I knew no one who could possibly be much interested about my welfare, I ceased to trouble myself with conjectures, and gave it to the flames.

CHAPTER IV.

—— He fishes, drinks, and wastes
The lamps of night in revel.

SHAKSPERE.

A few days from the receipt of these letters I had bidden farewell to the few friends with whom I was on terms of intimacy, and was on my road by the York mail, towards the great metropolis. I felt an eager desire to be there; for a something whispered me, (one of those inexplicable feelings which sometimes visit us, as though with a certainty of correctness in the supposition,) that Miss Villeroy and her party were at that moment sojourning there. It was, indeed, not at all unlikely that London would be the first place at which they would make a halt before they set forth on their tour.

It was now just about the close of the Lon-

don season, the beginning of the month of August ; a time when almost all the wealthy old country families, the daughters having been presented at Court, and gone a round of gaiety, in dinners, balls, routs, and revels, sufficient to pale the rose and deaden the lily of even their damask cheeks ; and after having been initiated into the mysteries of fashionable life, (only to be acquired in this finishing school of *haut ton*,) whirled from visit to visit, from the festive board to the opera-box, and from the opera-box to the ball to “disperse themselves,” and leaving bad air, sultry streets, and late hours, seek refuge in the “parks, and walks, and manors” they possess, in order to renovate their somewhat bated strength, in the woods and groves of the several counties to which they belong. Still, however, there is always a very decent sprinkling of fashionables even at this period in London. The cream of the cream of the aristocracy generally remain late in town, and apparently enjoy each other’s hospitality just after the full tide has a little subsided, more than when at high-water mark. Consequently, those few carriages now to be seen in the streets of the far west, bear mostly

on their panels the coronets of the ancient noblesse.

To me, London, with all its amusements, its vices, follies, and even its excellencies, was quite an unknown world. With my usual self-sufficiency, I chose to disobey my sire's instructions, and, instead of proceeding to the mansion of my relative in Portman Square, located myself at the first house of entertainment I arrived at, which was in Holborn, at the inn where the mail stopped.

I was, indeed, unfit at the present moment to enter upon strange society in a strange place. My feelings had been shocked, after being a participator and witness of such scenes as those I had lately been engaged in, and I felt it would take some time before I was reassured. After watching narrowly the bed of death, and seeing a dear friend at last die in my arms, for a time even the most careless of mortals must feel that "all the pleasures of the world," its cares, its anxieties, and its ambition, are naught; and that the only wise way to pass through life is to prepare for that hour, which "will come, when it will come." I therefore ensconced myself in a comfortable little parlour,

at the ——— inn, one of those old remains where you might suppose in former days some franklin from the weald of Kent, “having great charge,” would take up his quarters. There I resolved to spend a few days, and amuse myself by viewing the wonders of that city, of which I had so often heard.

To those who have never seen this wonderful place, all is indeed full of interest, and I chose to take my own impression and view it by myself; trusting to chance in the direction I took, and the adventures I might meet with. It was pleasant, I thought, to a man in my circumstances to be totally unknown and unobserved in his peregrinations. Accordingly, after my rambles, it was my wont to thrust my feet into slippers, and seated in the little private room of this hostel, my window looking out upon the turmoil and bustle of the yard below, take my chop in as much contentment as the melancholy which at present pervaded my spirits, would allow of.

I allowed myself a week of this sort of quietude; and during that time saw all that a country cousin is usually shewn of the sights of London. But it was especially my de-

light to search out and explore those parts of the town not so often cared for by strangers; and although there is now but little to remind us of the doings of the fierce Norman nobles, and the warlike kings of the immortal Bard, yet still, it is something to haunt even the locality where Shakspeare's scenes are laid. Accordingly I made a journey to Eastcheap, in the expectation of draining a cup at the Boar's Head, with as much devotion as if it was to have been actually tended me by the inimitable Francis himself. The Temple gardens too were full of interest, and I chose to regard them as when that brawl commenced, "'twixt wrangling Somerset, and fierce Plantagenet," which afterwards

Sent, between the red rose and the white,
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.

The inns of court, too, where little John Doit of Staffordshire, black George Bare, Francis Pickbone, Will Squele the Cotswold man, and other "swinge-bucklers" used to daff the world aside, not forgetting Grays Inn, where Master Robert Shallow fought with one Sampson Stockfish the fruiterer; and where, as

he prophesied, "they talk of Mad Shallow yet." All these spots were hunted out, and viewed with peculiar delight.

It was after a day passed in thus wandering about the town, that, on returning home to my inn somewhat late, I was accosted by a stranger, who, standing beside the entrance of the yard, was apparently enjoying the fresh air, and watching the arrival of the coaches, as he smoked his cigar.

I had observed this person once or twice before in my peregrinations; and it appeared to me that, like myself, he was a stranger in town, and occupied pretty much in the same pursuits. I had seen him looking with great interest, apparently, about the old buildings of the Temple; had crossed his path in several other parts of the town; and, by a singular chance, had met him in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, dogged his footsteps in Whitefriars, and nearly run against him once or twice in Hyde Park and St. James's Street. He was a genteel-looking man, apparently of the military profession. To his passing remark, as I entered the inn-yard, I felt myself obliged to make a civil reply, and we were soon engaged together

in conversation. It was, I found, just as I had surmised. Although not entirely a stranger in London, he informed me that he was taking the advantage of a short leave of absence from his regiment, to view those places of interest, which, on former visits to the metropolis, he had not seen. As we were thus engaged in similar pursuits, and lodged at the same inn, he proposed, after a short conversation, that we should take our chop together. I would willingly have been left to the indulgence of my own thoughts, but as he seemed a person of gentlemanly manners, I consented to his proposal, and we dined in my sitting room very cosily together.

He informed me during our meal that he was a captain in the Dragoon Guards; mentioned his name and regiment; that he had just come over from Ireland, where he had been lately stationed; and having visited his friends residing in Yorkshire, had run up to town on some urgent business, and intended to amuse himself for the remaining few days of his leave, by perusing the curiosities of London's famed city.

Of course I felt bound to throw off reserve

in the company of one so candid ; and, in return, let him know so much of my affairs, as that I was myself a candidate for military honours ; had arrived in town for the first time in my life, and intended to wait upon the Commander-in-chief, get myself fully accoutred, and then join my regiment. That I was named after my ancestors, and had resided hitherto in Yorkshire ; adding thereto, that after I had rallied my spirits, and refreshed myself for a few days, I was due to some relations who resided in Portman Square.

The Captain was extremely delighted when he heard my name and residence in Yorkshire.

“This is, indeed, fortunate !” he exclaimed (starting up and seizing hold of my hand)—“my dear Sir, you and I ought to be well acquainted, for our fathers were old friends before us ; and my relations live only two miles from the village of Foxholes-upon-the-Wold. You surely must have heard your father speak of Colonel Catchflat of Ganton Dale.”

I could not at the moment tax my memory with either the name or the residence my new friend mentioned ; but as I knew that my sire had dropped most of his early acquaintance, I

entertained no sort of doubt but that the son of one of his brother officers, when in the dragoons, was now before me. I felt, therefore, that I ought to be pleased with the circumstances which had thrown this polite gentleman in my way, and that every attention was due to him.

It is true that his manners appeared to me to be rather free and easy ; but then, I considered, they became one of his profession ; and being glad to meet a youth about to enter the army, he felt himself quite at home in his society. In short, I resolved to be delighted with everything about the Dragoon Guardsman, except his way of addressing his inferiors, and that I thought rather aggravated and unbecoming.

“How now, scoundrel!” said he, addressing the waiter, during our meal, “how dare you offer this gentleman, my friend here, Captain Blount, of Wharncliffe Grange in Yorkshire, such b—d stuff as this Madeira? Pardon me, Captain Blount,” he continued, addressing me, “for the liberty I am taking ; but it makes me angry when I see these rascals trying to impose upon a gentleman on his first coming to town. Begone, Sir,” said he to the waiter, “and send

your master here instantly with a bottle out of bin No. 4; and, d'ye hear? let us also have a couple of bottles of your very best champaign. D——, Sir, if I catch you playing any of your London tricks upon this gentleman, I will cane you as long as I can wield my weapon. Again I beg ten thousand pardons, Captain Blount; but it makes me quite ill when I observe such attempts at imposition. You will allow me my way in managing these fellows whilst you stay here; will you not?"

"Oh, dear Sir!" I exclaimed, "be under no sort of restraint on my account; cane the fellow to your heart's content, if you find the wine not to your liking, and we will have a sample from every bin in the cellar, till we get at the knave landlord's oldest vintage."

"Ha! ha!" said the Captain, "bravo, Captain Blount. Come, I love a lad of spirit. 'Fore Heaven, we'll have a rouse on't to-night."

I was indeed becoming not a little elated with the champaign, and the pleasure of finding a new friend of so agreeable a disposition; and after the melancholy which had lately pervaded me, the re-action was proportionably great. In short, I was soon whistled drunk, as the saying

is, and proposed turning out about eleven o'clock for a regular spree in the streets of London.

The Captain hailed the idea with delight, and sallying forth from our hotel, we held a consultation as to the direction we were to proceed in. I was for exploring the back slums in the east, but my companion preferring to visit the more fashionable end of the town "westward, hoe!" was the word, and we began our career.

The first move of my new friend, soon after starting, was to utter a continuation of the most horrible and terrific shrieks as we proceeded, which he informed me (on my supposing he was seized with a fit of epilepsy, and asking him in the name of Heaven what was the matter) was for the purpose of assembling the Charlies, and letting them know that he was out for the night.

This was rather a new idea, I considered; but supposing it customary, I forthwith joined in the cry, and gave the view halloo till the streets rang again. Accordingly, upon reaching that part of Holborn near Chancery Lane, we were regularly surrounded by gentlemen in woollen night-caps, and dreadnought coats, and

ordered, in peremptory language, either to proceed with less uproar, or they should be compelled to take us under their own particular guidance.

“Ha! by St. George! by St. Anthony!” cried my companion, and striking down a watchman at each invocation, he fled like lightning down the street.

No sooner was this done, than a shower of blows fell upon me from the quarter staves of those around; and I found myself so cruelly mauled, that striking out right and left, I followed his example, and fled at my utmost speed.

Rattles now were sprung in all directions as I ran, and the hunt was fairly up. The whole town was the same to me. I knew no more about its localities than if I had been flying through the streets of Constantinople. I, therefore, held manfully on straight forward, overturning every thing that came in my way. At first I thought it rather a diverting sort of pastime, and concluded that I should soon outstrip my pursuers. But to my astonishment, I found that the agreeable sound of the instruments they carried in their fists ran rattling

along the street before me, taken up by the watch, as each man heard the whirl of his neighbouring guard. Accordingly I was assailed and followed by an increasing posse, the faster I sped. One fellow, drawing himself beside the houses, dealt a furious blow at me with his bludgeon as I passed, another hurled his weapon at my shins, whilst a third dashed his fists and lanthorn in my jaws and face.

On right on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe.

At length, in Cranbourne Alley (for that I have since discovered to be the name of such a thoroughfare) I was fairly hemmed in and surrounded. Determined not to be taken alive, I wrested the staff from the man nearest, and dealt my blows so successfully that I floored several of my opponents. Eventually, however, I must have been overcome, but for the approach of a party of gentlemen, headed by a young nobleman, and who hearing the sound of the encounter, thrust headlong into the fray, and opposing their naked fists against the oaken cudgels of the watchmen, beat them about their

ears, and in a twinkling, disposed of a round dozen by laying them senseless on the pavement.

The throng, however, now swarmed so thickly upon us, that we fought like one of those regiments thrown into square at Waterloo, overwhelmed and almost hidden by the surrounding mass of assailants. "Hurrah for Ulster! and hurrah for Munster!" cried a great burly fellow, whirling his shelaleh round his head, and opposing himself to the leader of the gentlemen, who had rushed to my assistance. "Blood and ounds, but it's the noble Lord himself! by the powers, we've got him now!" The noble, or whatever else he might have been, and myself, were indeed evidently the two persons they seemed most desirous of capturing, and he saw it. He had been several times struck by the bludgeons of the watchmen, with blows one might have thought would have been sufficient to fell an ox, but of which he seemed to heed no more than if they had been so much thistle-down.

Wherever he dealt his own straight-handed hits, over went a sapient-looking Dogberry, with either disfurnished jaws, or broken collar-bone.

He absolutely chuckled with glee as he fought, and face and hands were covered with gore.

The continued spring of the rattles without, the *mélée*, however, bringing more and more, even my ally saw that his efforts would soon be overpowered. Accordingly giving the signal to his followers for one bold charge, and cutting their way through the press, they dispersed in various directions, east, west, north, and south.

“ Follow ! ” he said to me, as he darted straight forwards into the open square before us. Being closely pursued, we turned into a door, which stood most invitingly open, and overturning an immense fat old woman in the passage, we traversed over her body, and rushed most uncereemoniously into the parlour. It was filled with blooming young Hebes, who, seated around the festive board, with brimming goblets before them, were apparently passing away the watches of the night with mirth and jollity.

They all appeared as much delighted with our appearance as we were to obtain a refuge amongst them, and raised a shriek of joy that would have awakened the seven sleepers. Throwing his purse upon the table, the young noble

desired the old lady whom he had capsized, to fetch plenty of champaign, and order supper for the party immediately. Before, however, the old woman had time to leave the apartment, a hubbub at the door announced, that the guardians of the night had tracked, were at our heels, and forcing an entrance. We were quickly in the passage to oppose them, and once more the row begun. For some time, in the narrow entrance, we maintained an unequal fight the young ladies before mentioned escaping in rear of the premises. Then, and not till then, my gallant leader consented once more to make use of his discretion, and retire for advantage.

Again bidding me follow, he dashed up the staircase, four stairs at a bound, and rushing into one of the attics, threw up the window and agile as a cat, sprang upon the tiles. I felt the grasp of one of our pursuers as I darted after him; but succeeded in clambering over the parapet, and gaining the roof. We traversed the tops of several houses, till we came to a dark and dismal-looking row. My conductor, feeling his way as he proceeded, at length stopped, and grasped hold of a leaden water-spout, which he

judged went down to the pavement beneath, and throwing his legs over the parapet, began to descend.

"Does that gutter reach to the bottom?" I said, looking over.

"I wish you could tell me that," he answered; "but, as I don't intend to remain upon the tiles all night, I mean to ascertain the fact."

If I had drank less wine, and had a trifle more discretion, I should have hesitated to follow; but as it was, I thought myself bound in honour to accompany one who so had gallantly aided me.

Grasping, therefore, the square orifice of the pipe, I threw myself over the side of the parapet, and began to descend.

It was a painful and difficult task; and when about a quarter of the way down, I found my fellow passenger had met with some obstruction, as my feet touched his hat.

"Hallo! there," said he, "what are you at? I can't get lower. This pipe runs in a slanting direction here; and though we can get down it well enough, we can't so easily get along it."

I looked down, and the sight made me sick.

"I shall fall," said I, "if you cling there much longer."

"Fall, be d—d!" answered the young noble; "scramble up again. We must get to the top of the house."

"What is that," said I, "between us and the area, which I can just distinguish below?"

"Why, I suppose it's a balcony," he answered; "but it's too far to drop."

Unfortunately, there was a watch-box in the street just below; and the watchman, who had been nodding very cozily there, was awakened by our dialogue. Holding up his lantern, he espied two black-looking objects, clinging like bottled spiders to the side of the house, the lowermost one kicking his legs and stretching them downwards in the vain hope of finding some buttress or coigne of vantage for his toes to rest upon. Without the smallest pity for our situation, he began to spring his odious rattle, and cry "thieves" as loud as he could bawl, running up and down the street like a bedlamite.

"Get up, get up," said my companion in misfortune: "we'll give that fellow the slip yet."

In vain I tried to scramble up the pipe. Not being able to get my arms round it, it was

impossible to go on an inch. The young Lord was enraged at the delay.

"Why don't you get up?" said he. "If I was there, I'd punch your stupid head for you. Get up, I say."

He tried to get up himself by clambering over me, and I found it as much as I could do to hold on with his additional weight.

Luckily I had obtained a footing upon a large staple, or we must both have fallen. Our situation was one of great peril. I felt the pipe beginning to loosen from its fastenings. It got worse and worse.

"We had better take our chance, and drop," said I, "for, if the pipe gives way, we shall be flung headlong upon the spikes below."

The watchmen had by this time collected two or three more of the fraternity, and seeing the peril of our situation, dispatched a man in search of a ladder.

"Ah! ah! you're nicely trapped now, my coveys," cried one of the party, "hold on, if you can, till the ladder comes."

"You and your ladder be d——d," said the young Lord; "here goes for the balcony," and down he dropped.

CHAPTER V.

My mind misgives,
Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars,
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels.

SHAKSPERE.

No sooner was the lively nobleman on his legs, than he called out to me that all was right as a trivet, and desired me to follow his example. As I could hold on no longer, I slid a few feet further down, and letting go my grasp, should most likely have been killed upon the spot, but that luckily I alighted upon his lordship's shoulders, and broke my fall by nearly breaking his back. He was, however, quickly on his legs again, and, dashing in the window-shutters, was soon within the house.

Making his way out at the door of the apart-

ment, he rushed down the stairs, felt his way to the street-door, and unfastening a ponderous chain, unlocked it, and bolted out.

Keeping close behind him, I was in the street almost as quickly as himself. Once more we dashed amongst the cudgels of the awaiting watchmen, and took to our heels.

A solitary coach was upon the stand at one end of the street, and my companion making a spring upon the box, I at the same moment pulled open the door, and leapt inside. The horses had been disfurnished of their head-stalls, and were quietly ruminating probably upon their last flagellation, with their unhappy muzzles deep buried in their nose-bags. It was all the same to their present driver however, who seizing the reins and whip from the footboard, amazed their hides with the bastinado he bestowed upon them.

“They can go if they like,” he exclaimed, “and may I be d—d if they sha’n’t go now !”

The skeleton steeds seemed fully impressed with the urgency of the occasion, and the old rumbling vehicle never, perhaps, in its best days, rattled along in faster style. The present

waggoner, quite as headlong and wild as Phaeton, although without the aid of the ribbons, whipped them to the west.

It was lucky that at this time of night, or rather morning, there was not a vehicle in our way; consequently the principal danger arose from the perilous style in which we avoided the corners, and all but touched the various posts.

The bawling Jarvey, who had popped out of the public-house near his stand, to behold the unwonted action of his pair of bloods, as they galloped past, was soon distanced.

Away we sped, swift as the pinions of the wind. The steeds were not quite so despicable as are sometimes to be found chained to the splinter-bar of a hackney coach, there to be lashed whilst strength holds them up upon four battered and failing legs, and consequently they made a very respectable effort.

Dr. Johnson affirms there can be but few things in this world more exquisite than the delight of being whirled along in a post-chaise. He may possibly be right in his fancy, but I certainly began to dislike being whirled along at the pace we were going, in a hackney Jarvey. Enough I considered had been done for the

purpose of getting beyond the reach of the Charlies, as they were termed, and I began to meditate upon the propriety of making a flying leap from the door of the vehicle ; and thrusting my head from the window, advertized Phaeton of my intent, unless he drew up.

Our career was, however, as suddenly terminated as it had commenced. The steeds, although from long use, they had as yet galloped up one street and down another, without compromising themselves, or dashing the coach either against the corner of a house or edge of a post, now from some miscalculation ran full upon one, and the pole of the carriage hitting the post as fairly as the well-directed lance of a knight in the lists, was shivered into a dozen fragments ; both horses were thrown to the earth, and the coach itself was cooped head over heels. The driver, who had seen plainly the fate of his triumphant car, and had no means of guiding the maddened steeds from the destructive obstacle, giving them one more lash by way of a parting favour, leaped to the ground as the smash took place. Disregarding the kicking steeds, encumbered in their harness, pulled open the door, and helped to extricate

me from my situation, half-stunned by the shock, and altogether in no pleasant plight.

The spot where this catastrophe took place was the corner of Charles Street, Grosvenor Square; and it so happened that there was a rout at one of those splendid mansions in the neighbourhood. When, therefore, his lordship, calling to me to bear a hand, had thrown himself upon the encumbered horses, and commenced unharnessing and assisting them up, as though he had not the slightest hand in their fall; half a dozen footmen, attendant upon some of the carriages in waiting, ran up and lent their assistance.

Whilst we thus worked at the fallen steeds, and eventually got them upon their legs again, the clattering steps of the discomfited coachman, together with the rushing sound of a posse attendant, proclaimed that our old enemies, the watch, were again at hand.

"Whose party is this?" inquired the young Lord of one of the footmen.

Although I heard the question, I failed in catching the man's answer.

"Good," said the noble; "we'll go to it. Give coachee a guinea for his fare, and don't

say which way we have mizzled." So saying, and throwing a handful of gold amongst the footmen, he seized me by the arm, and walked off to the rout. "We'll sup here to-night," said he. "It's just the thing. I am invited—I recollect; and I'll introduce you."

Being quite in cue for a continuation of the spree, I did not refuse so agreeable a refuge from the watch-house; only in my own mind I doubted the possibility of our appearing in our present somewhat disfigured state. My companion, however, soon put all to rights. He was apparently well known to the servants of the house.

"We've had an upset," said he, when he entered the hall. "Show us a room where we can adjust our dress."

Two or three liveried attendants immediately ran before us, showed us into a dressing-room, and brought us all the appliances to remove from our outward habiliments the signs of the fray. Our coats were taken off and brushed, hands and faces washed, and in a very few minutes we were presentable amongst the splendid assemblage above stairs. It was one of those brilliant parties, given at the close of the

season, amongst the cream of the cream of the aristocracy, and was rather a cram. All the remaining rank and fashion in town seemed present together.

The Marquis and myself, therefore, walked in quite unheeded. As for myself, I was lost in admiration at the quantity of lovely women I saw around me ; creatures so beautiful as to realise the Mussulman's ideas of the heaven he hoped to attain to. It was, indeed, to me a sort of Paradise ; and I gazed from one to the other with the greatest delight. There seemed so much ease in this society, that you might have thought, from the absence of restraint and the delightful intimacy which appeared to reign throughout the assemblage, that the whole party must have been composed of one family. I felt that as my companion had thus brought me amongst his friends, he ought to introduce me to the lady of the house without delay. He however said there was time enough ; and threading his way through the various rooms, nodding to one acquaintance, and stopping for a moment to speak to another, we made the tour of the suite of apartments which had been thrown open to the company.

“Ha! Cœur de Lion, it’s a treat to see you,” said a young titled Guardsman. “Why, half a dozen of us have been making the tour of London for the last week to find your hiding-place.”

“It’s just as well for you, then,” returned the other, “that you failed in the search, Georgie; for it’s my pleasure to be quit of you all. I’m sick of your idleness, and choose to be naught awhile.”

“We heard you were in town,” said the Guardsman; “but none of us knew where you were to be found; no one had seen you; and you were, in short, incomprehensible, invisible, and inexplicable.”

“I’ll tell you what, Glansdale,” said Cœur de Lion, “I’ll be no longer guilty of this sin. I’m sick of fathering all your stale tricks, and begin to tire of my own. Dirty deeds are done by half the snobs about town, and my name is the stalking-horse. I shall cut the concern, altogether. But I’m surprized to see you here; I thought you were at Brussels. You were hit hard, I heard, on the Derby day.”

“Egad, that’s fact; I was rather hardly hit. Indeed, I may say, I *am* altogether floored.

The governor's in an awful state. Three times he has come down, as you know, to pay off my debts. Now he has completely turned his back upon me. However, it can't be helped; I must take the consequence, I suppose. To-morrow, I must send in my papers to the Horse Guards, and sell my commission; that will stop the gap for a while."

"Nonsense, man," said Cœur de Lion, "how much are you in for, altogether?"

Here the noble took the Guardsman apart, and they conferred for a few minutes.

"Call on me to-morrow, at eleven," said he, "where I have told you. If you get there at that hour, you shall have it; d—n the commission, it's not worth selling. Keep it, I tell you."

Lord Cœur de Lion passed on, and I followed. Wherever he went, he was regarded with curiosity; and his name whispered from mouth to mouth. Every one bowed to him with respect: for although the town rang with his wild and daring pranks, few noblemen in Great Britain possessed a nobler and kinder heart. He was a young man of very superior talents, too; and as much above the set he headed, as

greatest is from least. Whatever he undertook, he effected in gallant style ; whenever he was imitated, the perpetrators were sure to make a mull of it.

Although possessing a hundred thousand a-year, the young Lord was not much sought after by the anxious mothers who knew their daughters were out, for he never was known to flirt with a belle in his life ; and to fix him in matrimonial chains was a thing so hopeless, as never to have been apparently thought of by the most manœuvring dame.

Whilst Cœur de Lion was being recognized and accosted, I, being his companion, also came in for a share of notice occasionally. "Who's that tall, dark, young man, with Cœur de Lion?" I heard once or twice asked, in a half whisper. One surmised that I was young Monteith, who had just been gazetted to the Life Guards. Another said, "it must be the Duke Gonzalo, who had just arrived from Naples;" whilst a young, coxcomical, and dandified beau ventured to suggest, that I looked more like a bonnet to a hell, whom Cœur de Lion had introduced by way of spree, than anything else.

"How did the filly behave, Cœur de Lion ; I

understand you won that steeple-chase by a neck," said the young Earl of Cravecoeur.

"Yes, and I should have won it by a score of yards, besides; only, that she broke her back in the last leap," said his Lordship. "She ran fifteen yards after she was done for; and pitched headforemost the remainder of the distance. That last wall was a puzzler; six feet, and a wide ditch on the other side. She went at it like a thunderbolt, capsizing Harkaway Snob, who was riding Thornton's Mammoth, and going clean over them both in the jump."

"Who's that with you, Cœur de Lion? The ladies with me are most anxious to know," inquired an officer of the Life Guards; "they say he's either the Chevalier Bayard or Lord Herbert of Cherbury, stepped from the frame. We all thought Mac Jupiter of ours was the most splendid representation of the visage of one of the old Norman knights; but your friend beats him hollow. What a countenance!"

"It has been well punched, at all events, to-night," returned Cœur de Lion. "You'd better ask him who he is; for h—g me, if I can tell,"

he continued, turning back to look at me, for the first time.

Whilst this sort of desultory chat was taking place, I had come to a stand to observe an elderly gentleman, who, apart from the crowd, was listening to the lively prattle of a blooming Hebe of about seventeen; and apparently quite as much interested and careful in giving his answers to the trifling questions she asked, as if they had been put by the Prime Minister himself.

The tenor of the conversation arrested my steps, and I paused to contemplate the speakers, The iron-grey face of the cavalier was turned to the smiling eyes of the girl, as she played innocently with his eye-glass, and put her questions with as much *naïveté* as though she had been speaking to her own papa.

"Now do tell me, dear Duke," said the lively girl, "how came you all to allow yourselves to be surprized in Brussels at that ball?"

"We were not surprized," answered the warrior.

"Not surprized?" she returned, "but I am;

for we are led to believe, you all turned out to fight in your dancing-pumps. And now tell me another thing I wish to know: if you had been beaten at Waterloo, what would have become of you all?"

"We should have retreated to Brussels," returned the Duke.

"Ah! but could you have retreated to Brussels?" said the Hebe, archly. "I think you could not."

"I think we could," said the warrior, smiling.

"Well, you know best, certainly; but I doubt, you are mistaken. My papa and Lord Gustavus went over the field last summer; and they said you could not have retreated upon Brussels. And now tell me, since that point's settled, which of your achievements do you consider the most of, and like the best. And before you answer that question, tell me whether you like those new shells my papa has invented, and sent to Woolwich for the Artillery?"

"Well then, to answer your last question first. I do not like those new-fashioned shells, as you call them, of your father's," said the warrior."

"And why not?"

"Because they would be of little use," he answered, "in service; you might as well throw plum-puddings amongst the men."

"Ha, ha! what a wonderful man you are," said the Hebe.

"With regard to the second question. I like the passage of the Douro better than anything we did in Spain."

"Why so?" said Hebe, getting more animated. "I do so like you, because you listen to my questions, and answer them so carefully. I love fighting; and I adore you, as every woman in England ought to do." (Here Hebe kissed the Duke's hand.) "And now tell me, why you like the passage of the Douro better than all the rest."

The Hebe and the warrior passed on, and were soon hidden from me in the crowd; whilst I, admiring the goodness of disposition exhibited in the illustrious soldier (for such he appeared to be) which could patiently listen to, and kindly answer the prattle of the beautiful little romp who had fastened herself upon his arm, when noblemen and statesmen were seeking to catch his slightest nod, lost my introducer, and became aslo lost in the throng.

The wine I had drunk, and the whirl I had gone through, since I and the Captain had left our flaggons and our inn, had completely overcome my discretion, though the last action of the upset had considerably quieted me down. I was accordingly in an observing and monstrous sapient mood, and very much inclined to take everything as a good joke, and be argumentative, provided I could have found a listener. However, with all my drunken wisdom, I could not quite reconcile myself to my present position. It was not to be approved of, I thought, and I resolved to seek my introducer ; and after thanking him for his services rendered, to withdraw and find my way homewards.

Elbowing, therefore, a passage through the rooms, which "blazed with light," and brayed with minstrelsy, I came to a small boudoir, fitted up in the Eastern style ; and hearing voices within, I pushed aside the hangings, and entering, found myself the next moment in the presence of and not a yard distant from, the Duchess of Hurricane. To paint the surprise, and describe the look of the awful Duchess, it would be necessary to call to the reader's remembrance the occasional expression of the

countenance of the immortal Siddons, when she chose to be Lady Macbeth.

The moment she beheld the man whom of all others she abhorred, enter "with foul intrusion" into her very sanctum, she started to her feet, as if, "basilisk-like," to kill him with a look; whilst I with a start, like the Stranger when he espies Mrs. Haller, stood also transfixed.

My drunken wisdom immediately informed me, that I had committed a breach of decorum; and the truth flashed across my brain that I had unknowingly intruded into the mansion, and thrust my disagreeable presence into the select party of her Grace of Hurricane.

This was a position which sufficiently bewildered my already muddled brain; and was much easier for any one to get into, than to retire from with propriety. I was about to explain, that I had come with Lord Cœur de Lion; but I considered that would be to affirm that I had known to whose party I was intruding my presence, and to relate that I had entered the house to avoid the disagreeable consequence of a street-row and the watch-house I shrunk from.

The Duchess stared upon me for some time, apparently as if awaiting the explanation or apology I was bound to make; and I, as if fascinated by her gaze, returned her look in solemn silence.

In the elegant boudoir where the lady of the mansion had thus retired from the heat and fatigue of her crowded rooms, were congregated a select few of her intimates, and the conversation before animated sank at once on my intrusion.

The Duchess, either finding that I offered no word of apology or explanation, or perhaps seeing that I was a little flustered by flowing cups, with a haughty bow finished the scene by leaving the boudoir, followed by her party, who filed off with immense dignity of deportment, eyeing me as they left, as if I had been that strange animal described by Trinculo, half monster, half fish.

Had I not been "in case to jostle a constable," this meeting would have disconcerted me. As it was, I felt rather dashed, and resolved to leave the house immediately. One lady remained, and she was apparently so much surprized that

she was unable to follow the Duchess and her party. Before I left the boudoir I turned to look at her—it was Miss Villeroy.

Acting with my accustomed impetuosity, I forgot all but the delight of being thus once more thrown into her presence. The beautiful Miss Villeroy was before me, and alone ; it was like offered mercy, and I threw myself at her feet. She attempted to rise, but I seized her hand and detained her.

“ In the name of Heaven ! Mr. Blount,” she exclaimed, “ what can have brought you to this house, after what has so recently happened ? ”

“ Ask me not, dear Miss Villeroy,” I exclaimed, “ but since the gods have favoured me by thus inexplicably guiding me once more into your presence, hear me plead for a pardon for all those unhappy transactions that have driven me from your good thoughts,—deeds which have been thrust upon me by others, and by which I, the victim of circumstances, am rendered especially wretched, since they have procured me your displeasure. As for those, silk-coated slaves, I pass them ;—of you, and you alone,

I ask pardon for all that has happened. Say but that you forgive me what is passed, and I will leave you, if you wish it, for evermore."

Miss Villeroy saw that I was at least as much excited by champagne as love on this occasion. She looked absolutely frightened.

"I do forgive you," said she, resigning the hand I had seized, which I covered with kisses; "but oh! for the love of Heaven stay not here. God only knows what further mischief may arise from this unlucky intrusion of yours."

Miss Villeroy rose from her seat, and withdrew her hand in some displeasure. "I must not remain here, Mr. Blount," said she; "permit me to join the Duchess."

I arose from my knee, though not without an effort; my pride came to my aid, I felt I was hardly used by the young lady, and drew aside that she might quit the apartment. The entrance of the master of the house in some little haste hindered her from leaving the boudoir.

The Duke, after glancing rapidly at me, addressed himself to his niece.

"Miss Villeroy," said he, "as I presume

this gentleman is here to-night by your invitation, I request the favour of your introducing me to him."

"You will grant me your pardon, my Lord," said I, "since I conclude I am addressing the Duke of Hurricane, and allow me to set you right in this matter. However much I may have wished for the honour of an interview with Miss Villeroy, our meeting here is perfectly accidental; nor did your niece know, till a few minutes ago, that I was in the metropolis.

The Duke was a descendant of the Plantagenets, and had all the dignity, chivalrous bearing, and noble look of one of that great line. He was a little fussy at times, but altogether he was a splendid specimen of his order. He was apparently a trifle out of sorts on this occasion, and his distended nostril and eye of fire, gave him something the look of Charles Kemble when Faulconbridge grows irritable at the presence of Austria before the gates of Angiers.

"I thought I understood the Duchess of Hurricane that I should find Mr. Blount, of Wharnccliffe Grange in this apartment," said he, turning to me, doubtfully.

"I am that unfortunate man," I answered.

"Miss Villeroy," said the Duke (stepping aside to let her pass) "you will find your aunt waiting for you in the next room. Mr. Blount, perhaps you will favour me with a few minutes' conversation in my study."

"Farewell, Miss Villeroy," I exclaimed, in some little pique at her evident desire at an escape. "Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio, he's never anything but your poor servant. My Lord, I am yours to the Antipodes."

The Duke gave me a searching glance, and taking my arm, walked me off to his study.

"Mr. Blount," said he, as soon as he had closed the door, "your presence here somewhat surprises me. The Duchess of Hurricane supposes your appearance to-night is in consequence of Miss Villeroy's invitation. You tell me it is not so. To what circumstance, then, am I to understand we have the honour of your visit?"

"The circumstance, my Lord Duke, which has introduced me to you to-night, (for I conceive I am addressing the Duke of Hurricane), is sufficiently droll. In fact, every thing in this

world seems droll, and very amusing. You will, I dare say, excuse my relating the circumstance that has procured *me* the honour of being introduced to your Grace, if I split the difference, and tell you the person. The Lord Cœur de Lion was the person who brought me with him to your Grace's party."

The Duke saw immediately what was the matter. He rang the bell.

"Although," said he, "I should, in any other circumstances, have felt honoured by the introduction of a friend of Lord Cœur de Lion; yet, after what has so recently happened, I should have thought you would have hesitated to accept the offer of being introduced, when you found to whose party Cœur de Lion was invited. Seek for Lord Cœur de Lion," said he to the servant who entered. "His Lordship and yourself dined together, perhaps."

"I never dined," I replied "with Lord Cœur de Lion in my life, nor ever saw him till about an hour and a half ago. All I can say is, that I knew no more than the man in the moon where I was coming, nor can I tell you how I got here. That's all

the explanation I can give. The cross examination begins to grow tedious, my Lord ; let us finish it. I feel sorry for the intrusion, and shall take my leave."

"Perhaps you will favour me by waiting till his Lordship comes down," returned his Grace. "I must know why he has placed us both in this somewhat disagreeable situation," saying this, he motioned me to take a chair. "I have heard much of you, Mr. Blount," he continued. "Though we have never met before, I regret it has been so, for I think much that has happened might have been avoided, had I seen you in time to have prevented the intimacy between my niece and yourself."

"I am greatly obliged to your Grace for your candour, at any rate," I said. .

"Or, indeed, known," continued the Duke without noticing the interruption, "that you were so constantly a visitor at Marston Hall. I speak plainly, Mr. Blount, because I conceive it my duty so to do, and I must further tell you, since we have thus become acquainted, that as a guardian and relative of Miss Ville-roy, I could never permit that young lady with my sanction to receive the attentions of

one who bears a reputation for so much wildness and unsteadiness of conduct, and who, from his untractable disposition, is, I have been told, an exile from his father's roof, and alien from his affections."

"Good," said I, "have you any further trade with us? I begin to think this is vastly amusing."

"My Lord Cœur de Lion," continued the Duke, as that nobleman entered the room, "I feel rather surprised that you did not consider at the time you invited Mr. Blount to accompany you to the Duchess of Hurricane's party to-night, that recent circumstances had occurred, which would render it any thing but agreeable to that gentlemen to be presented here. Mr. Blount knew not to whose house he was coming, he tells me; but as you are related to Lord Hardenbrass, now lying seriously ill at Marston Hall you of course must have been aware of the unpleasantness of such meeting."

"You have already told me, Hurricane, more than I knew before, in telling me your friend's name," said Cœur de Lion, laughing. "There seems little introduction necessary on my part, but truth is, we were not so much to blame, for my

introducing him was the thought of the moment. I do not think he knew to whose house he was coming. If there be offence in the matter, you must visit it upon me, Lord Hurricane; for I am alone in fault. Since we came together, we'll even depart together."

"You seem well met," said the Duke, "at all events. May I beg the favour of knowing when and where you became acquainted with Mr. Blount, my Lord?"

"Certainly," returned his Lordship, "I can explain to your satisfaction in a few words the length and breadth of our intimacy. The first sight I ever had of our friend here, who seems mightily inclined to drop off to sleep in that easy chair of yours—"

"Enough said, gentlemen," said I, interrupting him, and half asleep, "unconsciously to have—"

"The first sight I ever had of our friend was in Cranbourne Alley, fighting with at least a dozen watchmen. His prowess interested me, and I rescued and brought him off."

"Unconsciously," I continued, endeavouring to argue the point.

"The first time I ever spoke to Mr. Blount,"

interrupted Cœur de Lion, "was on the gutter of Mother Midnight's establishment behind Leicester Square. That he was a gentleman, I felt convinced from his conduct; and being upset here at your door, I brought him to your Grace's party."

"Unconsciously," said I, now half asleep, "to have offended."

"So," said the Duke, "you took the liberty, then, of bringing a person seen and known for the first time?"

"Unconscious," said I, again endeavouring to have out my say, in spite of the drowsiness which had seized me.

"In the situation," continued the Duke, "you have mentioned, and introduce him in the state you see he is in, at the Duchess's party. Enough, Sir, you shall hear further from me on this matter."

"Unconsciously (I at last managed to utter) to have offended the Duke and Duchess of Hurricane, gives me the greatest pain. But I beg to say, it has been quite unconsciously on mine and this gentleman's part. Nevertheless, if offence is taken, it can't be avoided, and the affair must proceed. My Lord Duke, I have the

honour of wishing you good night, this is my address," so saying, and laying on the table Captain Catchflat's card in place of my own, I managed to rise, and Lord Cœur de Lion, making a haughty bow to the Duke, we walked out together.

CHAPTER VI.

He a captain! Hang him, rogue! He lives upon mouldy stew'd prunes, and dried cakes.

SHAKSPERE.

TOTALLY unused to wine, I had, like Cassio, but poor and unhappy brains for drinking, and already experienced the different stages of drunkenness described by Olivia's clown, first fool, then madman, and was now about nearing the third stage, my wits being nearly drowned, or at least becoming stupified; all which stages had supervened from the first dose or bout. However, being strong in constitution, I wrestled with the inordinate fiend, and followed my companion resolutely.

"That Hurricane is an ass," said Cœur de Lion, when we reached the street: "he's always fancying that his dignity is in danger. It's just as well that he is to call me out for this night's

fun, for I had always rather be called than call."

"If any body's dignity has been hurt, I think mine's the most damaged," said I, "and if any body's to be called out, it strikes me I ought to be the appellant."

"We'll think about that hereafter," he returned.

"May I beg the favour of knowing where we are progressing towards," I asked, "for the long and interminable row of lamps before us seems to lead in an avenue of dancing stars, to the extreme end of the world. I protest I see no termination to them."

"This," said Cœur de Lion, "is Brook Street, and my destination is nearly as far as the last lamp you can spy. I recommend you to get a bed at the same hotel, unless you have made up your mind to sleep in the streets."

"I do, indeed, feel rather uncomfortable and extremely sick, Lord Cœur de Lion," said I, "and the very stones in this lonely street, (as Rob Roy says), seem to rise up to apprehend me; they appear to have a strange inclination to hit me upon the nose every step I take."

“ Ah ! ah ! ” said Cœur de Lion, “ that’s because you can no more smoke, than you can drink. It’s the cigar, man, which I gave you just now, that makes you so giddy. You must learn to smoke in order to meet the tastes of the Hussars ; a Dragoon without a pipe in his mouth, is as incomplete as without his spurs. Now I think on’t, we’ll turn in at Madame De Galloni’s in Regent Street, and see what’s going on there. I’ll introduce you to Madame De Galloni, the finest woman in town.”

“ Another introduction, and more fine women, eh ? ” I said. “ Well I’m on the wide world now, that’s a fact. May I beg the favour of knowing who your friend Madame De Galloni is, for I had rather not experience a second edition of her Grace of Hurricane.”

“ Madame de Galloni is a French lady, not long arrived from Paris,” answered his Lordship: “ she is always glad to see her friends at her little *soirées*, and she will be only too happy to welcome us to-night. But mind one thing, you are not to play there ; I won’t introduce you unless you promise me not to play. It’s a clear case, you’re exceedingly green, and ought

to have brought your grandmother up to town to take care of you."

"*Vous avez raison*," said I, "it's a lamentable truth. I'm extremely obliged to your Lordship for supplying the old lady's place. I do, indeed, feel extremely helpless just now; that cigar hath proved mine enemy, indeed."

"Here we are at Madame's," said Cœur de Lion, stopping and knocking at a door in Regent Street, which after some little delay, and more than one person peeping at us with the chain up, was at length opened, and we entered and walked up stairs.

Madame De Galloni's apartments were brilliantly illuminated, and filled with company. Several very handsome Frenchwomen were present, and a decent accompaniment of heroes from the *grand nation*, cavaliers whose visages were garnished with hair enough to stuff all the chair cushions in the apartments, and whose diamond studs and breast pins, gleamed and glittered upon the sombre ground of the dirty shirts in which they were stuck. The remainder of the company was made up of London *roués* and metropolitan flats.

Several tables were occupied by players, at

several sorts of games, and one large table, at which the less determined gamblers were congregated more for the purpose of flirting with the handsome Frenchwomen than for the sake of the game, was presided over by the lady of the house. She clutched avariciously in one hand a large-sized money box, with a small opening at the top, into which she received a stipulated *douceur* from whoever won the pool at the round game at which they were engaged.

She arose the moment she saw us enter the room, and rushed up to us with great affectation of delight: "Ah," said she, "mon brave! I am so glad you come again. You was so droll last time you come, dat we have been quite *misérable* ever since; dis is de first *soirée* I have been able for. You was so funny, dat we all get into watch-box, and taken before de police in de morning.

Cœur de Lion had been bullied, I afterwards found, by the Frenchmen, and some of his friends cheated, upon which he had soundly thrashed some half-a-dozen, and kicked the rest into the street, the hubbub attending which had caused the whole party to be carried

off to the watch-house; himself alone escaping, by upsetting every one who came in his way.

"You play, mon cher?" continued Madame, bending her head capriciously on one side. "Ah no, you nevere play. Your handsome friend play, I dare say. Come, sare, and join.—My Lord—you not to forget de box, de box keep de house, and I keep de box."

My companion thus solicited, dropped his gold into the box, and I followed his example, to the no small delight of the hostess; and we sat down to observe the progress of the game.

Madame De Galloni was a splendid specimen of French beauty; she was tall, and rather of the stoutest, but her form was magnificent, her complexion was dark, and her hair like the raven's wing. Her eye was as brilliant as the diamond, and her features beautifully formed; but when you looked upon her, you could see she would as easily murder with a stiletto while she smiled, as with her beautiful eyes. One minute she looked like an angel, (that was when the winner deposited his coin in her tin box,) the next she scowled like a fiend, that was

when any one forgot, or endeavoured to shun the offering.

"Twas pity, I thought, that one so handsome, should be so avaricious. The box was the ostensible way in which she kept up her rooms; but the truth was, that the hirsute Frenchmen attendant, were the pluckers of all unfortunates, who ventured to play.

"Ah, Captain!" shrieked the handsome Galloni: "why you not put in my box dat time. Shame, Sare, to deceive me. How am I to keep my rooms light, for you to come play widout you put in dis box, you nasty beast."

"Voilà," said the Captain, dropping in the coin.

"Yes, voilà, it is," returned the Frenchwoman. "You please to say voilà every time you win, Sare, aloud, mind or you shall not play more. You cheat me once, twice, three times, if I had not look sharp after you."

"Madame," said the Captain, "have a care; I don't like those observations."

"No," returned the Galloni; "you like not observation too much, ven you win, as you

alwaise do, and cheat my box as you alwaise try."

"I'll play no more at your table," said the offended militaire, rising, "Voilà, here's for your d—d charity box."

"You must speak by the card, Captain; equivocation will undo you here," said Cœur de Lion.

"Who made that observation?" said the Captain, turning fiercely round, and rushing up to him.

The Captain was extremely short-sighted, and he rammed his face close into that of the noble, who sat with the utmost coolness, and smiled upon his fiery visage.

No sooner did he catch a fair glimpse of the countenance of Cœur de Lion, than his ferocious look changed into something like consternation and dismay, and he drew back, as though he had seen a basilisk.

"Oh, my Lord," said he, "I beg ten thousand pardons. I did not know it was you who spoke. I trust I see you well," and he drew off.

In progressing to one of the other tables, he passed and recognized me.

"Ah! Mr. Blount," he exclaimed, seizing

my hand, "I am delighted to see you again."

It was my friend, Captain Catchflat, from the Wolds.

"Do you know that fellow?" said Cœur de Lion, carelessly; "is he a friend of yours?"

"Yes," I said, "we are staying in the same hotel together. He comes from near the same part of the world I myself come from."

"Oh!" he returned significantly, "does he?" and he walked away to another part of the room.

The Captain, meanwhile, had a thousand apologies to make for having outran me in the beginning of the evening's amusements. He proposed teaching me how to play at rouge et noir; and forgetting the injunctions of the generous Cœur de Lion, in the course of an hour I was a considerable gainer, and quite in love with the game.

My introducer fought rather shy of me, after he discovered my acquaintanceship with the Captain. Once during the night, he addressed me, advising me to cut the concern and sheer off to bed, after which I saw him no more.

Meanwhile, the Captain kindly taught me

several other games of chance ; and at day-break, we took leave of the radiant Frenchwoman and nymphs, and made our way towards our hotel, I having lost every coin I had in my purse, over and above what I had won, and standing indebted to Catchflat a trifling sixty pounds.

The Captain was now in higher glee than ever, and vowed he would look in at the finish, and get a cup of coffee before we returned to our inn. We accordingly made our way to a place situated somewhere near Covent Garden, where, seated upon benches in a filthy room, amongst some scores of paviours, Irish bricklayers, and carters, we refreshed ourselves with coffee and roasted potatoes. Here the Captain, who seemed always anxious for the beginning of a fray, managed to offend an Irish hod-bearer ; and, after having volunteered not only to fight him with one hand tied behind him, but to thrash him within an inch of his life in ten minutes, received, with the greatest humility and meekness of disposition, sundry cuffs from his opponent in the face, and more than one kick behind ; whilst I myself managed to come in for several ugly blows, in the endeavour at

restraining Pat's ire ; so that, at last, I became the principal in the fight, and was obliged to take the Captain's challenge upon myself, and engage with a hod-man in a stand-up fight. A shindy amongst a posse of Emerald Islanders, is a mighty catching affair, and I had quickly half a dozen hammering at me at once. The row spread like wildfire, and the Finish was in a state of disorganization. The market-men, who were English, fought on my side, and the Paddies whacked away for the hod-man. The room became too small for the conflict, and the riot extended into the street. Rattles were sprung by dozens, and no man regarded them, till at last the Captain, myself, and some half a dozen of the lowest ruffians from Calmel Buildings, and St. Giles's, were captured, and conveyed to the watch-house. Here we were quoited down, and thrust in a sort of cellar, amongst other worthies who had disturbed the peace of the metropolis.

The place was filthy and wet, and at first so dark, that, as Falstaff says, you could not see your hand. However, those who had been in durance before us had become more accustomed to the gloom, and seeing the Captain and myself in the garb of gentlemen, they amused

themselves by throwing all the filth they could find over to our end of the prison.

The gallant Captain Catchflat seemed as though he had served an apprenticeship to this sort of treatment. He gathered himself together in one corner of the dungeon, like Dalgetty in the cell of the Duke of Argyle at Inverary; and to my indignant complaint of such an outrage upon the sacred persons of gentlemen of his and my own dignity, he replied in the words of the vision in the cave of Montesinos, "Patience, and shuffle the cards."

"Patience, my dear Sir, and a trifle of endurance, you will find the best recipe here. Gentlemen," said he, to the crew of pick-pockets and ruffians who were amusing themselves at our discomfort, and giving us a foretaste of the pillory, "gentlemem, if you are gentlemen, behave yourselves like gentlemen, and give us as little of this ungenteel usage as you like. We've no objection to stand tip if you'll allow us to sleep comfortably till we're had up."

I have passed many a night since that day in the open world, and exposed to the elements; but I never felt so chilled and uncomfortable as I did in this London watch-house. Ere long,

however, we were had up, fined, and reprimanded for our behaviour, and reached our inn, dirty, draggled, uncomfortable, and ill, as if we had been ducked in half a dozen horse-ponds. The Captain recommended a hot bath, and retired to bed, to try and sleep off the fatigue of the night's amusement.

To sleep, however, I found impossible; and I lay and pondered over the ill-luck that had dogged my footsteps, and led me to expose myself, in such a situation, before the Duke and Duchess of Hurricane, and Miss Villeroy. I saw that all was now over in that quarter. I had disgusted Miss Villeroy, and confirmed the ill opinion which both the Duke and Duchess had entertained of me; and all without the least fault that I could perceive on my own part.

Now that I had become sobered, I recollected everything which had happened. I had degraded myself in the eyes of the whole room; and there appeared no explanation or excuse that I could offer. "Alas!" I said,

"It will help me nothing,

To plead mine innocence; for that die is on me,
Which makes my whitest part black."

I had, however, one consolation. The Lady

Constance de Clifford had not seen me. Apparently, she was absent from home, and had been spared the shock of witnessing the entrance, as an intruder in her mother's party, of one whom she had honoured with her friendship, but who was regarded by them as a half-drunken blackguard, whom it was great forbearance not to kick into the street.

The noble, generous, and true-hearted Constance, I felt convinced, would never believe ill of me. I called to mind every look and expression of her beautiful countenance; all the hours we had spent since we had first become acquainted; the delightful scenes in which we had lingered, and walked and ridden amongst, returned to my remembrance; and suddenly I found myself more in love with Lady Constance de Clifford, than ever I had been with her beautiful cousin. Nay, I had wondered where my eyes, ears, and senses, could have been ever to have so preferred the one to the other:

Not Hermia, I said, but Helena I love:

Who would not change a raven for a dove?

Now would I have given a thousand ducats for

but half an hour of one of those opportunities I had so often neglected. With my accustomed impetuosity, I resolved to begin by times ; and jumping out of bed, and seeking my writing materials, seated myself at the little dressing table, and addressed her in the following stanzas :—

The lonely heart divided far,
From all it lived but to adore,
Is dark as night, whose brightest star
Is seen no more.

Alas ! that hopes should only spring
Within my soul, to be o'erthrown ;
Like budding flowers, ere blossoming,
All withered, strewn.

Thy perfect form, within my breast,
Have I long hoarded up in vain,
And never can my heart be blest
By thee again.

Not so, not so ; the hour of need
Thy noble heart will not forsake ;
Thy own sweet breast the bruised reed
Will never break !

Then come ! But yet I fear to see
My fancied joys all melt away,
And faded, as I gaze on thee,
Hope's dying ray.

To gather from thy glance the woe,
I should expect—but yet will not,
To see thy smile of scorn, and know
I am forgot !

And wilt thou dash the hopes away,
That to thy love still eager cling,
As birds that watch the earliest ray
Of sunny spring ?

And will thy heart, so truly loved,
The dearest prayers of mine repel ?
To gentle pity steeled—unmoved—
Love's yearnings quell ?

When all around with gladness own,
The rapture of thy loveliness,
My heart will still—its hopes o'erthrown—
Thy form caress.

Were endless night my future lot,
Should morn but wake to misery,
Till mind was gone—or life was not—
I'd think on thee !

Again, then, let me see thy face,
Thy lip, where smiles should ever play,
If there no thought of me I trace,
I'd turn away.

The brightest dream that cheered my rest,
The sweetest voice that whispered peace,
The loveliest form that filled my breast,
Will ever cease.

Having finished the above effusion, I felt as if I had in some sort made reparation for my former blindness: and paved the way also, perhaps, to reparation of the ills of the last few hours. Could I but see Constance, I imagined it would not be hard to restore myself to her good graces. The clock of one of the neighbouring churches was striking six, as I folded up and directed my verse. It was too early to send them; so tumbling into bed, I soon fell asleep.

It was late in the day ere I was awoke by my excellent friend, Catchflat, who, knocking at my door, announced that he had ordered our dinner at home, as he conceived I should not feel much inclined to turn out early.

“But, my dear fellow!” he exclaimed, drawing up the blinds of the window, which admitted but a dubious sort of light into the room, from the Chaucer-like balcony, which hung over the inn-yard; “why, I had no idea that you had been so punished about the nob in last night’s spree. Your peepers are in mourning; have you looked at yourself in the glass this morning?”

“The devil!” I said; “you don’t mean to

say my eyes are blackened. I do, in truth, feel rather sore about the face and head, and my nose hath a sensation as though a hot iron had been thrust up it, and each nostril stuffed with cayenne pepper. Pray ring the bell, my good sir, and order me hot water. I will inspect the state of my countenance forthwith, and join you below as soon as I am dressed."

When the Captain left the room, I jumped out of bed, and seizing the looking-glass, beheld my visage nearly as much dilapidated and in as rueful a state as the knight of La Mancha's must have appeared after his carcase had been travelled over and his jaws demolished by the drubbing of the lover of the gentle Maritornes. There was a black circle entirely round each eye, my nose was swollen into a perfect proboscis, and portions of the skin struck off my cheeks.

The boots of the inn, a little quiver fellow, with an infantine voice, and a figure like what one might have imagined was the identical form of the inimitable Francis of Eastcheap, grinned like a little ogre when he entered and beheld me.

"Oh, my eyes! what a guy," said he.

“ You’ll excuse me, Sir, but you do look sich a rum un. My vigs! arnt ’em been a pitching into you, neither. You’ll excuse me, Sir; but there’s a been a more than one a hitting at you when you catched that hiding. I wish I’d a been somewhere near when it happened.”

“ I wish you had, my little man,” said I dolefully; “ or any one else with spirit enough to have helped me out of that affair. I shall not be fit to be seen for a month.”

“ You’ve give ’em as good as they brought, however,” said he; “ look at your poor fists else, all knock’d to bits.”

Here the little boots put himself into scientific attitude, and began to dodge about the room, like a sprite, now parrying one blow, and anon beating off another, springing back and darting forwards, apparently for the purpose of obtaining an advantageous plant in his imaginary adversary’s knowledge-box, with so much alacrity, that I began to have a very elevated opinion of his prowess. But when at last he delivered his straight-handed blows, he became so totally infuriated, that he darted all over the room, like a perfect bedlamite.

“ Ah, I wish I had been beside you, Sir,” he

said, stopping to take breath ; “ I’d have smash’d ’em up. I consider myself one of the fancy, Sir ; and if I’d a been in the way when you came home last night, I’d a clapped a raw beef steak upon your precious face. Now, it’s too late. You can’t wash a blackamore white, arter he’s once been properly wallopped, and slept upon it. The only thing you can do now, is to send for the ’poticary, and clap half a dozen leeches on each eye, and as many more upon your nose. I lived with Tom Crib once, Sir, and many a time I’ve doctored his nob for him. I’d have pitch’d into ’em.”

During this display of the little fellow’s prowess, and whilst I forgot my own rueful plight in laughter and admiration at his eccentricity, a shrill voice called to him from the balcony, which seemed to strike him all of a heap, and he sneaked out of the room, more like a dog with a bottle at his tail, than the hero I had began to consider him.

The voice which so paralyzed his gallant bearing was that of his wife, the athletic chambermaid of the hotel, and the thundering bastinado she bestowed upon his carcase, gave me an opportunity of judging in how far his scien-

tific and curious parries, learned whilst with the champion, had been of service. It seemed, however, that the advice regarding the application of beef steaks applied in time, were as necessary for him as myself, for I much feared, from what I witnessed in the balcony before my window, that the poor little man would be likely to exhibit as disgraceful an appearance as I myself did. After pummeling him till she was out of breath, the Amazon consented to tell him what the infliction was for.

"You little rascal!" said she; "you poor, beggarly, fellow! how dare you stay out all night, and leave me to do your dirty work. Go," she continued, "you apology for a boots, and do your work! you miserable specimen of a porter, or I'll break every bone in your diminutive body, I will!"

In short, I was obliged to interfere, and procure him a pardon; and in return, he promised to deliver the enclosure, containing my verses, some time that evening with his own hand.

It was not a little annoying to me to be rendered thus unfit for decent society, by my adventures at the Finish; for during the time I had lain tossing on my pillow, I had revolved things

over in my mind, and determined forthwith to shift my quarters from this part of the town. My father might soon now arrive, and I thought I had better, therefore, call and introduce myself to my relatives in Portman Square. My new friend, too, I had reason to hold in slight regard, as to his personal courage, for had he behaved with proper spirit in the society to which he had introduced me, I should not have been obliged to take up the cudgels in his defence.

The Captain, I saw, was a coward and a bully. To me he had behaved most unhand-somely ; and yet, so meekly did he beg my pardon, that, for the life of me, I couldn't find it in my heart to kick him. He offered me many little civilities too whilst confined to the house, volunteered to call upon several tradesmen at the west end of the town, and giving orders for my outfit, took upon himself the task of arranging what articles were necessary for a cavalry officer on first joining his regiment. He also purchased me a pair of green goggles to hide the unsightly circles which adorned my eyes, and, by way of amusing the dull age of a whole week, during which I remained unfit to be seen, he once more undertook to give me a lesson with the dice-

box, in the joyous hope I might revenge myself for what he had won from me at Madame de Galloni's rooms. In fact, I felt myself under considerable obligations to the gallant Captain for his many civilities, and his great attention during this time; and, as we frequently strolled out after dark, he introduced me into several small gambling houses, where we were so fortunate as to make the acquaintance of other gentlemen, his friends, of disposition similar to his own.

In short, before many days were passed in this worshipful society, I acquired such a fondness for hazard, blind-hooky and billiards, that I was never happy but when either dice, cards, or cue was in my grasp. We began with the pasteboard after breakfast, knocked the balls about till nightfall, and rattled the bones till dawn; till, in short, I lost every sixpence I brought with me to town. After that, I staked every article of baggage I possessed; and at last, stood deeply indebted to Catchflat besides.

It was on the morning after I had been thus cleaned out, that, on coming down to breakfast, I found my friend had left town for a day or two. He was gone, the little waiter told me, to pay a visit to a nobleman residing about ten

miles out of town. Finding, therefore, my face pretty well restored to its wonted comeliness, I hid the still remaining dark circles, which had now taken the various hues of the rain-bow, under cover of the capacious green goggles the Captain had provided me with, and sallied out to take a walk in the west end of the town.

London is certainly an amusing village. Some men there are who cannot bear to step one furlong beyond its precincts, who know no feeling of delight in the breath of Heaven, unless breathed with a proportionable quantity of foul and pestilent vapours, qualified with the smoke and gases of this particular metropolis ; men to whom a green lane, a forest glade, or the misty mountain tops, is an abomination ; nay, even a country town or village, be it ever so pleasantly situate, a hell upon earth ; men who are called “men about town,” who are known to each other from youth to age by sight only, as having been met prowling, with lack-lustre eye, about the different streets for years and years, identified with the very stones they tread on, and the streets that have risen up during their progress in life.

"How long I have known that man about town!" says one of these loungers. "Winter and summer, I do not think that gentleman has ever left London for a day, and I can't see the slightest change since the first hour I saw him."

Each thinks the other an ever-green, as each remembers his fellow street-walker, for years, (he thinks as he now sees him,) with the same jaundiced smile upon his visage, sauntering in the same path. Of earth and sky he takes no part in observing the beauty; but how quick is his glance upon a passing face recognized as known about town? Singular beings! not one could give the most distant guess as to the means whereby the other lives, or his place of abode; neither does their long-sight acquaintanceship engender or beget any feelings of good will.

"I wonder," says one, "who that fellow can be? I have seen him every day these fifty years about town. I meet him in the city, in the Park, at the theatre, in every street at the west end, and by some strange chance, nearly knock him over at every corner I turn; but never yet

could I discover man, woman, or child, who could tell me his name."

Sometimes you meet one of these old-world faces in the coffee-room of an hotel, taking his solitary dinner and pint of port. Quietly, silently, and studiously, he progresses through his meal, spelling every advertisement in one of the daily papers, as he discusses his food. My friend Catchflat had pointed out one or two of these "London haunting *märtlets*," as men who had been in the sear when he was a boy, and still pottered about the metropolis unchanged, like the wandering Jew, or the man looking after his shadow. "I cannot say," he continued, "that I should like to live entirely in London all the year round, but still I think it is the only place within the environs of which a man could be imprisoned for life, without feeling the imprisonment an infliction."

Just at this time, it was a great treat to me to wander about, and observe the various places of amusement offered by merely passing through its streets. On this day, I amused myself by sauntering about the west end; and towards evening, finding a few stray coins in my pocket, turned

into Joy's Coffee House in Covent Garden, and ordered dinner. Tired with my walk, I threw myself into a chair in the coffee-room. Two youths were sitting over their wine, discussing the police reports in an old newspaper, at the table next me.

"How often that fellow has been had up," said one; "I wonder this last affair didn't get him a turn at the tread-mill." "Who is the fellow, his companion?" inquired the other. "I've seen him a good deal about lately, and have observed Catchflat pigeon him nicely once or twice in the h—ll in Jermyn Street. I thought he was a leg at first; but I suspect now that he's a green-horn Catchflat has got hold of somewhere in one of his country trips." Just at this moment the speaker caught sight of me at the table near him; and turning his back in some little confusion, signed to his companion, and the conversation dropped.

I instantly rose from my seat, and begged the loan of the paper. In the police report I found the following:—

"Marlborough Street. On Saturday, two persons, calling themselves gentlemen, were charged

with creating a most disgraceful riot in Covent Garden, early in the morning. It appeared they had been drinking with the low ruffians who are just now employed in paving New Street close at hand; and having reduced themselves to a state of madness, they became so outrageous, that even the blackguards assembled thrust them out of their society. Upon which, they rushed into Covent Garden, knocking down every person who came in their way, till they were ultimately secured, and lodged in Marylebone Watch-house. One of these worthies has been frequently before at the police-office, and is well-known. His name is Catchflat. He once, we believe, held a commission in the army, but was turned out of the service for malpractices; since which he has narrowly escaped hanging for forgery—a regular *chevalier d'industrie*. The other *gentleman* gave the name of Blount; and is, we dare say, a horse of the same colour—*arcades ambo, id est*, blackguards both. They were fined and discharged, after being properly reprimanded.”

This paragraph completely spoiled my appetite. I saw that I had been gulled by this “common robber,” who had, as Falstaff has it, “made a

younker of me." I had taken mine ease in mine inn to some purpose ; and whilst I was so absorbed in the new accomplishment this Catchflat was teaching me, I had not even found time to look into the daily papers. Swallowing my meal as fast as I could gulp it down, I determined to go home, and cane the Captain within an inch of his life. Before I had finished it, however, another paragraph, in the *Morning Post* of that day, and which the waiter handed to me, completely drove the former one, and the miserable scoundrel, Catchflat, for the moment from my remembrance. It was headed, "The Recent Duel," and ran thus :—

"We are grieved to hear, that the Duke of Hurricane still continues in the most precarious state ; and his medical attendants fear there is not the slightest chance of recovery. A second attempt was made yesterday by Mr. Guthrie, to extract the ball (which has lodged somewhere near the heart) without success. The Duke has borne both operations with the most heroic fortitude ; and it is believed a third attempt will be made by Mr. Guthrie next week. The quarrel between his Grace and Lord Cœur de Lion, we are informed, was in consequence of some diffe-

rence, which is said to have arisen at the Duchess's rout on the 16th instant; and in which it is also said a third person, whose name we have not been able to learn, was the offending party, Lord Cœur de Lion taking the quarrel upon himself, and refusing any explanation till after the meeting had taken place."

So then a duel had been fought, and the life of a great and good man—a man of high rank, and an ornament to his order—was likely to be sacrificed, owing to my having unfortunately made my appearance at his house with my Lord Cœur de Lion. It really appeared to me that I was not only unlucky myself, but the cause of ill luck in others. I was like the sea-fowl, whose coming is the forerunner of danger and tempest. My infernal verses, too, had perhaps arrived pretty much about the time Lady Constance de Clifford most probably beheld the bleeding body of her beloved father brought into the house—murdered, she might well think, by my means.

At the moment I lost all spirit, and began to despair. Rallying, however, after some time, I determined to sally forth, and soundly thrash my new friend, Captain Catchflat.

“There will, at least, be some sort of satisfaction in that,” said I. “How dare the dastardly swindler introduce himself to a gentleman, and after getting him into all sorts of scrapes, cheat him out of his money and his respectability?”

Most youngsters are incensed at finding themselves the dupes of a designing knave. I felt I had proved myself extremely soft ; and after the dejection consequent upon reading the last paragraph, my choler arose when I reflected on the first. I felt annoyed with myself for having endured the society of a man, whose style I could not approve, and whose companionship I could not have borne, had not my battered visage forced me to remain in doors. Like Paul Pry, I vowed never to be good-natured again. “D—n the fellow,” I said, “I would not have suffered his vulgarity for another week, for the sea’s worth.” I thought the chagrin of it would have killed me. To be mixed up with such a scoundrel in the public papers, was a scrape indeed. “Captain, thou abominable cheater !” I exclaimed, rising, and seizing my hat ; “art thou not ashamed to be called Captain ? If captains were of my mind, they would truncheon you

out, for taking their names upon you, before you have earned them."

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said the waiter, presenting his bill; "I beg your pardon, Sir, but it's customary to pay for what you call for in this hotel, especially as we have never had the pleasure of seeing you except on the night you supped here with Captain Catchflat; you will find both the accounts there, Sir."

Let it suffice, then, to mention that, on reaching my inn, I found to my dismay that this worthy officer had absented himself without leave or beat of drum, carrying with him not only all those sums he had so frequently won of me, but actually every article of any value I had in my portmanteaus, and whatever he could lay his hands on of the various articles which had been completed and sent home, leaving me moreover to pay for all the breakfasts, dinners and suppers he had partaken of, and so generously treated me to, whilst we had been *bons camarades*. But worse than this, than these, than all, was the discovery which I soon afterwards made, that from his having so frequently attended me to the shops of the tradesmen I was having my different articles of clothing from, he had

made use of my recommendation, and procured large quantities of goods for himself. In fact, he had done the thing well, and I looked the idiot I felt myself.

A ponderous portmanteau, which he had brought with him to the hotel, was all that remained for me to take possession of in return; and as he had taken *out* the pickings of the kit, I declined having anything to do with that.

The Bardolph-faced landlord of the hotel naturally held me in some sort of suspicion; and I found myself compelled immediately to despatch a letter by my little friend, Boots, to my relation in Portman Square, in order to be extricated from the difficulties by which I was now surrounded.

Nothing, indeed, would satisfy mine host, till his bill was paid; he said, "he was one of those obdurate citizens, whose hearts are hardened to any sound but the chink of sovereigns," possessing no more mercy or consideration than an unbribed sheriff's-officer. "He doubted," he said, "nothing of my respectability, but that wouldn't serve his turn. He must have his bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill."

The Captain," he hinted, "could never have managed matters, as he had done, without my assistance." At length, growing irate at his impertinence, I turned him out of the room, and threatened to kick him down stairs.

CHAPTER VII.

Had I but died an hour before this chance
I had liv'd a blessed time ; for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality :
Renown and grace is dead.

Most sacrilegious murder.

SHAKSPEARE.

FROM the unpleasant dilemma, which I have recorded in the foregoing chapter, I was however after a few hours relieved. A carriage drove into the yard, and General d'Acre was announced.

Sir Augustus d'Acre had served much both in America, and "on other grounds, Christian and Heathen." He was a thorough specimen of the old school:—pipeclay from heel to pig-tail. He wore his frock-coat buttoned to the chin, white gaiters underneath his trousers, and had all the appearance of one of those

officers of a former system, who would be like enough after wheeling into line, to take off his cocked hat, and say to the enemy with a polite bow, "Gentlemen of the French guard, give us your fire." I do not think he could have changed his pace from ordinary time had his house been about to be blown about his ears, and the train actually lighted.

The little boots darting into the room before him, with great glee mispronounced his name in announcing him.

"General Cake, Sir," said he, "to see you."

The General gave him a look as he passed, that seemed to shrivel the poor little fellow like parchment in a white heat. If there was one thing he prided himself upon more than another, it was his name. There were three hundred lashes conveyed in that one glance of his eye. The next moment it fell upon me, as I rose to receive him, and I felt at once like one of his own soldiers upon parade. Some men are born commanders, "some achieve command, and some have command thrust upon them;" but I am convinced that he who is not a soldier born, will never become one by education. As

Kent said of King Lear, "this man had that in his countenance, which he would fain call master—authority."

Before such a man it was not agreeable to appear on parade with a pair of black eyes. He heard the difficulties into which I had got without comment, and mine host was summoned with his bill, and cross examined. The old gentleman perused and dwelt upon it item by item. Some things he taxed. Not even a bottle of soda water escaped his eye or was allowed to be overcharged. He then settled it, and rising, demanded if I was ready to depart.

"You have been expected at Portman Square for the last fortnight," said he. "We could not conceive where you had got to. I thought of putting you into the Hue-and-cry."

He listened to my account of my sojourn in London, and its consequences.

"The usual effects of youthful self-sufficiency," he remarked; "for the future, always follow your instructions. Had you come to my house, as your father directed, all this would have been avoided."

"But I thought, Sir,——" I said.

"You thought," he interrupted, sharply, "who gave you leave to think. You have chosen a profession, young man, in which the trouble of thinking will be spared you. Your father wrote to me that you meant to make the army your profession. If so, you must eat, drink, and sleep, Sir, to the sound of the drum. What say you," he continued, opening the door, "shall we move off?"

"Am I to return then, Sir, with you to-night?" I inquired, "had I not better remain at this hotel till to-morrow morning? I fear I shall put you to inconvenience, by coming thus suddenly."

"As you please, Mr. Blount," said he, drily; "but I think you have had enough of hotels for some time. My carriage is here, Sir, for the purpose of conveying you to my house, where you have been expected for the last fortnight. I advise you to take advantage of it, unless you prefer this dirty public-house."

Behold me then, located in Portman Square; a member, for the present, of Sir Augustus d'Acre's family. The old gentleman was something of a philosopher, and his style of life was different from that of persons in his own

sphere. His ideas were totally at variance with the times he lived in, and having in early days been much in the wilds of America, the sort of life incident to campaigning in that country had made him despise the luxuries of modern times and the state of high civilization at which we have arrived. As soon as he became accustomed to the doleful appearance I cut, and he discovered my disposition was not so wild and reckless as he had been led to expect, he condescended to unbend from his usual stiffness of manner, and we became good friends.

My father's marriage had highly disgusted him, and at first he rather visited the sin of it upon me, his son. He had himself been married whilst in the army, and had several daughters, pure in heart and beautiful in person. They were all married, and his wife long dead, so that he lived almost alone in the great metropolis. He had once been in Parliament, but gave up politics with disgust; and being as punctilious on points of honour as a Spanish grandee, he professed he could not understand the nice distinctions of Members of Parliament and when honourable members, on the inquiry

whether imputed rascality is personal to themselves, and their adversary assures them that he never intended to be personal, and the honour of the man is unimpeached; such explanation, he allowed, was highly civilized, but somewhat unintelligible. Equally extraordinary did it appear to him, on entering into fashionable society, to observe the state of high civilization, and the various distinctions there.

“They do these things quite different amongst the Sioux and the Pawnees,” said he; “but then they want civilization.”

“The clubs in London,” said he to me one day, as we were sitting over our coffee after dinner, for he never, even when he had company, sat and fuddled himself with wine; “the clubs are a nuisance and a bane, where men learn every sort of selfish enjoyment. Society, such as I can just remember it in my early youth in England, is completely disorganized. No man is now happy at home, but all rush to the discomforts of a palace, in the shape of a club-house. Times are very much changed for the worse, or I perhaps fancy so. This seems to me to be the age of mediocrity: a most unamusing period. Whether it is that

a life in the woods has spoilt me for enjoyment, or whether my occupation being gone, even in my old age I still sigh for the march, the parade, the volleying discharge from wing to wing along the blazing line, the embarkation and wafting of armed thousands upon the swelling tide, and all the circumstance of war,—I know not. But it seems to me that we have become exceedingly common-place. This generation seems rushing through life like a torrent; and even in fashionable life methinks we go too fast.

“People now do as much (apparently without any enjoyment of life) in one week as they used to do in a whole season. They run from house to house, from appointment to appointment, from dinner to rout, and from rout to ball, from opera to concert, and so on. They hurry on, Sir; their spirits become dissipated, and their health fails them. The heart is overworked even in early youth, their energies are exhausted; and to a short life of constant excitement, succeeds perhaps a patched up constitution through old age, or an early death. The females fly likewise for support, during this *sauve qui peut* scramble, to the

support of wine, and other stimulants. The great medicine is obliged to clap them upon the back, and encourage them, or they sink. Tonics and juleps, opium and liquors, are all put into requisition, in order to restore their shattered nerves. Thank heaven! I, myself, was born before nerves came into fashion. Think, Sir, what our ancestors, even of the times of the merry Monarch, would have thought of having on their visiting-books from one to two thousand names, and all these people to be called upon, entertained and visited.

“Look at the eagle velocity with which we travel. Are we the more inclined for the road now than before? Are our enjoyments the greater? I, myself, can leave my residence in the country at eight o'clock in the morning, and arrive in London at ten. The railway, indeed, runs through my very park; but I do not consider myself a bit happier for that. On the contrary, I am about to sell the estate of my forefathers. I shall never go there again. Talking of the country, where are now the sports of the field, or what are they when you enter into them?

“I invited a neighbour of mine, the son of

an early friend, to stay with me, and go over my preserves. We had a *battue*, as it is called, and my poor pheasants and hares were slaughtered in three or four days' amusement. What would our ancestors, who followed the chase from sunrise to sunset, say now to a hundred and thirty brace in one day to one gun on the highlands, the sportsman merely leveling and firing, with a troop of retainers in rear to load as fast as he discharged, and pick up the dead and wounded?

“Indeed, country life, as well as town life, has undergone no slight change in a few, very few years. There also we find civilization in full progress. The middle classes now disdain to take upon themselves the superintendence of the conduct of their dependants; the consequence is, an increase of immorality. In farm-houses the labourers are no longer admitted as inmates. The farmers are no longer the good old English yeomen who used to keep up order and decorum, and hold themselves responsible in some sort for the good behaviour of their servants; and in lieu of devotion to the interests of employers, and love for the very hearth in which they dwelt, the masters have

now slight regard, insolence, carelessness, and plunder to complain of. All classes at the present day, too, are nearly dressed alike ; and the black-guard who figures in the police report for picking pockets, the counter-skipper from the ribbon shop in Regent Street, and the noble, are equally well clothed. Whilst my own daughter, the Countess of Bosworth, is closely copied in the fashion of her bonnet, gown, and even the style in which she braids her hair is imitated by her lady's maid ; ' Greasy Joan, too, who keels the pot ' outvies them both in the effort to keep upon a par in elegance of apparel."

The army in which he had served so long he was entirely devoted to, and often held forth on that subject ; but he seemed to sorrow over it, and the idea of interference with its discipline since the glorious campaigns of the Peninsula, and other grounds, drove him to a pitch of madness when he spoke of it.

The British infantry, he calculated, was short by more than twenty thousand men, if it were to discharge the duties assigned to it, even in peace, with any consideration for the soldier. The military authorities, he thought, deeply sympathized and lamented over their fellow

soldiers, "the unwearied and undefatigable infantry of the line," and would be willing to alleviate the unceasing pressure on them, occasioned by the inadequacy of their numbers, for the purposes of colonial service and home duty.

Thus, then, the old General and myself became exceeding friendly, and before I had been a week under his roof, he had grown quite attached to my society. Our tastes seemed to suit exactly. He had never had a son, and I became one to him. I told him all my mishaps and misadventures in regard to my home, and its disagreeables, and he vowed he would set all to rights when my father came to London, before I joined. He accompanied me to the Horse-Guards, when I attended the levee of the Commander-in-chief and the military secretary. It was gratifying to me to look upon men so renowned, whose "high deeds achieved of knightly fame" had extended from pole to pole; men of honour, bright as their own swords, the true metal to stamp chivalry's imprint upon.

At his own request, I had taken into my service the little boots of the hotel. I found him the perfection of a valet; and managing to

get acquainted with the domestics of Lord Hurricane, he frequently informed me how matters were progressing in Grosvenor Square ; where, indeed, much had taken place to cause me uneasiness. The Duke of Hurricane, in a dreadful state of health, had been removed to his seat in Warwickshire, after the ball had at last been extracted ; Miss Villeroy was with the Earl of Marston. Town had now become nearly empty, and the General and I had it all to ourselves. My father having returned from the continent, wrote me a severe letter upon my conduct whilst in town, refusing to advance me any further supply till after I had joined.

The old General bade me be of good cheer under these circumstances.

“Here is a cheque,” said he, “for five hundred pounds to begin with. Meanwhile, I take this opportunity of telling you, that I have seen enough of your disposition and conduct to understand you perfectly, and like you extremely. I have five times as much as I can spend, and you may draw upon me whenever you wish for a supply. My three children, as you know, are all well married. The smallest income of the husband of the youngest, who

married a commoner, is ten thousand a-year. They want nothing of me ; and I shall leave to you the bulk of my property. To-morrow I shall alter my will in your favour, we will then settle what you want for the present emergency ; and on Saturday, you know, you are to set off for Ireland."

The goodness of the General was as unexpected as it was gratifying, and I returned my acknowledgments with tears in my eyes ; not that I cared for the accession of fortune promised, but because I had found a friend who loved me, and seemed to understand my disposition.

It was on a lovely summer's evening, when the foregoing conversation took place. A few of those fashionables who had' not yet left town, were snatching a breath of air within the enclosure of Portman Square, and the General proposed that I should take a turn and smoke my cigar there with him. We sauntered up and down upon the grass for some time, discussing matters of business connected with our family concerns. At length, he expressed himself tired, and proposed returning within doors.

" You need not come home so early," he

said, looking at his watch ; “as it is now only ten o’clock. Take this key, and let yourself in. I have given Goodwin, my man, leave to be absent for a couple of days. To-morrow, my dear young friend,” he added, “I shall put you in a position to defy the frowns of fortune, and the machinations of the enemies you have told me of. Your father, too, I have no doubt, will come to his proper senses. I have always had some influence with him, since he served under my command in Spain. To-morrow, we will have a morning devoted to business. I expect my solicitor to breakfast, and we will afterwards vary the scene, by driving out, and dining at the Star, at Richmond. Good night, my boy. We’ll rise betimes, and breakfast at eight, to-morrow.”

Oh never
Shall sun that morrow see !

A presentiment of evil haunted me as the old General left the enclosure ; and I stood and watched till the street-door closed upon him, and shut him from my sight. I never saw him again in life. In his secure hour, “in the dead waste and middle of the night,” my new

valet, the little wretch I had hired from the Chaucer-like hotel, in Holborn, arose and cut the old soldier's throat from ear to ear, making off with all the plate in the house, and snatching up all the ready money he could lay his hands on. The immortal Shakspeare shows us murderers of various dispositions ; some possessing the organ of destructiveness "fully developed," and others who are but the instruments of more bloody-minded rascals. From the crowned king, the crook-backed tyrant, who can coolly moralize upon the aspiring blood of Lancaster as it sinks in the ground, and who confesses to the accomplishment of being able to smile, even as he deals with his victim, to the common cut-throats, such as Dighton, Forrest, and Tyrell ;— from the noble Thane (for he is a noble gentleman, even in his worst of moods, and the beautiful things he gives utterance to in his sorrow and in his anger, almost persuade us to forgive him his misdeeds, sorely tempted and paltered with as he is, by fiends both fair and foul), from the noble Thane, then, to the shag-eared villain, "weary with disasters," and ready to set his life on any chance, "to mend it, or be rid on't ;" Shakspeare, I say, shows us murderers, and

brings them before us with a reality and fidelity of description, as Shakspeare alone can picture. We see them "in habit as they lived;" fellows by the hand of nature marked, quoted, and signed, to do "the deed of shame." Nay we can see the bloody business clearly brought before us, and whilst "o'er the one half world,"

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep.

Wither'd murder
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf
Whose howls his watch
With Tarquin ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost.

From the "best to the worst of the cut-throats," we can, indeed, imagine their very outward favour, and almost "hear the stones prate of their whereabouts;" and we can as easily reconcile the bloody deeds of the iron men of those times, as we can conceive the more atrocious and disgusting scoundrels of our own more modern days, whose professional talents were exercised in the well-got-up plot of plastering up the mouths and nostrils of itinerant Italian monkey-boys, in order to prepare them good

subjects for the dissecting-table. All these seem, by the hand of nature, "quoted and signed to do a deed of shame." But, that this miserable specimen, the little boots of the hotel, whom I had adopted for a valet, and whose dimensions, in any thick sight, were almost invisible, who seemed all alacrity to serve, and who, as is somewhere described of a good-intentioned servant had a where-shall-I-go, what-shall-I-do-for-you sort of countenance, that made it quite a pleasure to employ him, that this "thin-faced gull," this "forcible feeble," this "atomy," should have found heart and hand to attack, even when asleep, the noble-looking old soldier, whose "silver skin, laced with his golden blood," lay with his throat gashed from ear to ear—that this little wretch, who must have known, had he but faltered in the attempt, his victim would have smote him down, as easily as he would have brushed a spider from the wall—that this weak and debile minister should have done so horrible a deed, was to me so extraordinary, that I refused at first to credit the suspicion.

Certes, I must confess to the opinion of little men generally having souls of vast mag-

nitude ; and we frequently see, I think, the smaller man the greater and more valorous hero. Witness, for instance, the wives they take. Nay, it is no uncommon thing to see some "poor palsied elder" overawed, and overwived by a strapping Amazon, who might fairly be considered a fitting match for Colebrand the giant, or some other mighty man, rather than thus manned by an aglet, more fit to be worn in her cap than follow at her heels.

That the fac-simile of the drawer, Francis, had done this deed, was soon apparent enough ; for he was hunted down, and taken at Liverpool, with some of the General's property upon him, and about two hundred pounds' worth of money, being the produce of what he had hastily turned into coin.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh, boys, this story
The world may read in me. My body's mark'd
With Roman swords : and my report was once
First with the best of note.

THIS fresh calamity did, indeed, completely unnerve me, and I felt myself a regular Boabdil el Chico. Such was the state of depression and discomfort into which this event threw me, that death itself would have been hailed by me as a welcome messenger.

"Fresh hopes," however, says the poet Thomson, "are hourly sown in furrow'd brows;" and youth is the season in which, however we may be cast down, we most quickly rally. My London season was over; the difficulties into which I had so unwarily got, General d'Acre had luckily emancipated me from; I obtained a few

days' more leave from the Horse-guards, and my father having arrived in town the night before I was to start, we once more met.

I waited on him at Mivart's Hotel, in Lower-Brook-Street. He saw me alone, although the whole Levison party were there with him. The late events of my own career had not rendered me a bit more amiable in his eyes; added to which, his young wife was now in that promising way which gave him hopes of an increase to his family.

"You are much altered, Sir," said he, as soon as I entered the room; "I scarcely should know you. What a life is this you have been leading here! When do you join your regiment? or do you now mean to do so at all?"

"It is my intention, Sir," said I, "to set off for Ireland, to-morrow."

"Have you followed my instructions, and asked for an exchange into the infantry?"

"I have not, Sir," I replied.

"Why?"

"I do not like the infantry, and have never contemplated the necessity of exchanging into it. I would rather try—"

“So had not I,” said he, interrupting me. “To be brief, Sir, I cannot make you an allowance sufficient for that service, and shall therefore myself apply for an exchange. As you have got every thing requisite, you must however now join the — Hussars. But, at the same time, India must be the future field in which you must hope for renown.”

Our interview soon ended, and with a somewhat heavy heart, I set off for the Emerald Isle, in the Bristol mail. Arrived at Bristol the next morning, I embarked on board a steamer, for Cork. It was rather a raw and gusty morning, I recollect, when we put forth; and before we were a couple of hours old at sea, it blew a perfect hurricane. It was my first impression of the mighty deep, and a tolerably deep one it made upon me. There were several youths who, like myself, were about to join their different regiments on board. One of these who was due to an infantry regiment, then stationed at Cork, I may as well mention, as I subsequently grew better acquainted with him, and the companionship led to no beneficial result; on the contrary, I became involved in a considerable

share of difficulty in his cause. There was also among us youth, an old and weather-beaten veteran, a man who had seen so much service in the East and West Indies, and who had followed the trade of arms so long, that his careworn body's dissolution seemed but to await his rejoining the corps to which he belonged, in order that the volleying musketry might sound a requiem for him. Most of the passengers were so unwell, with the roughness of the weather, that they were fain to seek the cabin. The old veteran, myself, and three others, sheltering ourselves beneath our military cloaks, held converse upon deck. A sudden pitch of the vessel threw the old veteran from his seat, and sent him sprawling to the side. He was so weak, that he could not arise, and I staggered across and lifted him up.

"Thanks, Sir, thanks," said he. "My usual luck—it has happened to the weakest man in the ship. Ah! gentlemen, in me you see a miserable remnant of humanity; one whose career is almost run. Hardship hath done its work upon my poor body—dissipation hath done thrice the work of hardship. Rich sauces, generous wines,

and the spicy viands of the East and West have ta'en their turn upon me; climate, toil, disease, and villanous drugs have helped the completion; and more than one of the bullets of the Peninsula have found their billets amongst my muscles, veins, and arteries. I have been upon sick leave, Sir, now a whole year; and finding the enemy in force upon my constitution, I resolved to cut the medical board and their infernal examinations, and rejoining my old corps die as I have lived, 'with harness on my back.'

"I'm going to the old fiftieth, Sir, to give up the ghost, and only hope I shall be permitted to reach Fermoy, that I may again see mine old comrades, and the regiment once more on parade; and then the sooner this carcase returns to its mother earth the better."

"You despond, Sir," said I, "you'll recover if you keep up your spirits. The sight of your old companions in arms will cheer you."

"Thank ye," he said, languidly, "thank ye; so the Great Medicine in London told me.— 'Keep your mouth closed,' said he, 'and avoid the bottle, and you'll recover.' But, Lord, Sir,

I never could withstand temptation. I'm the martyr of indigestion ; and the moment I touch food, I'm in the torments of the damned. Brandy and water is all I live upon ; my medical man allowed me but three slices of dry toast daily, and a glass of Madeira ; but I know I shall commit an indiscretion when the nausea of this voyage is over. I'm as sure to eat as to land—if we ever do land—for the weather does not seem inclined to mend. The captain looks anxious, and the sailors are silent and solemn—a sure sign we shall have a bad night on't, gentlemen. If I could find one or two of the men to help me down below, I should be thankful. Curse the sea, say I, for I never see a ship now, but it reminds me of the weary months I have spent on board the tubs of transports, in which we used to be sent out, and wrecked in former days. Well, gentlemen, since you say you are just joining your different regiments I wish you joy ; it's a glorious profession ; I've lived in it many years, and passed my time not so unpleasantly."

"I've heard," said the youngster, before mentioned, "that it's necessary to fight a duel on first joining, Sir. How is that to be managed

genteelly, and without giving offence in the corps? I should wish to do like others. Must I tread upon some officer's favourite corn, or had I better wait for a gentleman to tweak me by the nose? It is all one to me;—equal to either fortune."

The veteran looked at the youth askance,—
"Necessary to do what, Sir?" said he; "fight a duel! Young man, you had better not join with that idea impressed upon your mind, or you will find yourself in a scrape, perhaps, before you are very old in your regiment."

"How so?" said the youth, who was something of a boaster in his style and manner. "I suppose, I can fight my way out of it, if I do get into a scrape? I'm not altogether unpractised, and can touch off a blue-bottle fly on a man's proboscis at twelve paces, with ease."

"You will find it difficult to get an opportunity of doing so," returned the veteran, "if you are known to join with such sentiments and intentions. You will be voted a nuisance in the corps, and cut accordingly. Take my advice, young man, look upon your brother officers as friends, not targets for your pistol practice. You will find

before you have been many years in the army, plenty of opportunities of displaying your valour, without seeking it in the mess-room. That man's an arrant coward," added the veteran aside to me, "I'd stake my life upon it."

The youth laughed: he wished to be thought a cavalier of the first water, and to make an impression upon his auditors. I soon afterwards helped our veteran friend to his cot, where, after administering a glass of his favourite beverage, I left him to his repose.

The night was, as he had prognosticated, a rough one. So much so, that the fires were put out by the seas, which washed into the vessel, half the passengers went to prayers, and all next day we lay at the mercy of the winds and waves, like a helpless log upon the waters. At last we made the Cove, and landing, hired some jaunting cars, and arrived safely at Cork on the morning after.

In the coffee-room of one of the hotels, our veteran friend, myself, and military fellow passengers, sat down to enjoy the first comfortable meal we had taken since we left

Bristol. Tea, coffee, and new laid eggs, are a most delightful treat after the discomfort of a storm at sea. Cork is, moreover, famous for salmon, deliciously dressed, and served up in sheets of clean writing paper.

Our veteran friend had distrusted his powers of forbearance, and albeit, he particularly ordered the gossoon to bring him nothing but a small slice of dry toast, no sooner did the tea and coffee, with the other creature comforts appear, than after eyeing them for a few minutes, he drew himself to our table, and commenced eating like a famished wolf, or a half-starved tiger.

"This salmon will be my bane," said he, as he stopped to take breath. "The first time I ever landed at Cork, thirty years ago, I remember breakfasting on it, in this very room. Twelve times I have been across the Atlantic since that, and yet I remember it as if it were but yesterday. Delicious treat! Waiter, more salmon here, more muffins, here, another devil, and more brandy, my stomach is like a ready-braced brass drum, Sir, but I cannot halt now. Fermoy," he continued, dolefully; "I shall

never see thee after all ; farewell 50th, I shall die of salmon ! Help me to another slice, gentlemen. Thankye ! that will do ; yes, I shall die of salmon, and George Chacot will get the step."

"There's many a true word spoken in jest," says the vulgar proverb. Captain Wornout positively died from eating that salmon. He was seriously ill before he left the table, and in two days he died of inflammation of the intestines. By that time, however, I had reached Limerick, and become acquainted with my brother officers of the —th Hussars.

First joining a regiment is an event of no slight importance in a man's life. The —th was a crack corps, as it is termed, and consequently was officered by men of rank and fortune, gentlemen in every sense of the term ; and by them I was received with marks of kindness and good feeling. At least half of them were connected with the nobles of the land, and the remainder were the sons of your fine old English Esquires ;—men, whose princely allowances would necessarily make them unwilling to follow any other but the profession of arms. Amongst gen-

tleman of this rank, then, I commenced my military career; and being commanded by an officer, who was like a father to the whole regiment, and at the same time a strict disciplinarian, and, moreover, who had seen much service in the last war, I soon began to forget my late mishaps and misfortunes in the excitement and splendour of the soldier's life.

Our duties in Ireland were not much relished by my companions; to me, however, all was delightful, because all was new. Whether, therefore, in the pursuit of duty, I was engaged with the troop in the capture of a still among the bogs, or driving pigs, cows, and sheep, upon a tithing expedition, or keeping the streets of some town during an election riot, or even escorting some wretched prisoner to the gallows' foot, and mounting guard whilst the finisher of the law performed his office upon him amidst the infuriated pisantry, I was equally content to find myself obeying my orders, and playing the part assigned to me with all true duty.

Six months after I joined, we were ordered to England, to the great delight of the whole

regiment, and shortly after, our kettledrums and trumpets were sounding through the streets of Manchester. At Manchester, we found our presence of some slight use in keeping the turbulent artificers occasionally from half demolishing the town, for which service we had the favour of meeting with the dowered daughters of some of the millocrats, and dancing with them at their soulless and dull balls. We then rung the changes upon almost all the great manufacturing towns in that part of the kingdom; giving occasional detachments wherever any little outbreak made the presence of a troop necessary. And one fine morning, I found myself in command of a small party which had furnished a detachment in a village consequent upon several acts of incendiarism, and marching to join the main body, that day expecting to arrive at York.

It is one of the peculiarities of a soldier's life, that he can look back upon more homes, than the man of any other profession. The service necessarily makes him a welcome sojourner in so many delightful places, in which he becomes attached, not only to the inhabitants,

but to the localities around, that each quarter appears the spot most favoured by nature, and containing the most amiable of residents. The intimate of most families of condition in the neighbourhood, and admitted more into the bosom of such family than any other chance visitor, he is generally the favourite of the household; welcomed by the elders, because assuredly a person of gentility and education, and taking precedence amongst the younger, the more thoughtless, the lovely, and the gay, from the chivalry of his appearance, (with horse to ride and weapon to wear) and the devil-may-care easy and careless life he professes. Such being the case, he becomes, if not professedly the lover, at least the friend and confidant of every bevy of pretty lasses in every town or village he stays six months at, and remembers in after-life a little romance connected with every such quarter. Then comes the route, the march, and the new scene, just as he had begun to feel himself the intimate friend of the good folks he must so abruptly bid farewell to, and by whom he is regarded with the same kindly feelings. Then, as I said, comes the fresh quarter, the new acquaintance, and

the like endeavour at making himself an agreeable guest, with generally the same success.

The cavalry have more of this than the infantry ; as, during twenty years of a man's life in the dragoons, he stands a chance, what with outbreaks and disturbances of one kind or other, to visit in turn, almost all the towns and villages in England with his troop of free lances.

And who can wonder at this feeling of good-will towards him of the chivalrous post and laced jacket ? who can be surprised if the eye of the loveliest of the sex should glance a far-off look, when some lord of sash and epaulette is found amidst the gay and festive scene, since the hand which has sought the honour of a set, and so gently leads the dance, can also wield the broadsword for protection of those halls of dazzling light, and rein the fiery steed in full career, like a Mameluke ?

The amusing life of this sort, which for the last six or seven months I had been leading, had in a great measure obliterated many of the disagreeables I had before been mixed up

in, and I began to feel myself altogether a different person. The last place I had been resident with my detachment, was Ripon in Yorkshire, and the morning's march lay through the celebrated watering-place, Harrowgate.

CHAPTER IX.

Away, you cut-purse rascal ! you filthy bung, away !
By this wine, I'll thrust my knife in your mouldy chaps,
an you play the saucy cuttle with me. Away, you
bottle-ale rascal !—since when I pray you, sir ?—What,
with two points on your shoulder ? Much.

You are a gentleman, and a gamester, Sir—

I confess both ; they are both the varnish of a complete man.

SHAKSPERE.

HARROWGATE was in its palmy days when I visited it. At that period, half the rank and fashion of England were to be found at the various hotels, situate upon that Scotchified and barren-looking common, and a more delightful and altogether amusing watering-place it would be difficult to imagine. Most of the great sporting men of the day were also to be found at Harrowgate

VOL. II.

H

during the season, and consequently amongst the other diversions and modes of passing away the time, high play was constantly resorted to by many of the visitors. Indeed, it was no uncommon thing for the servants of the hotels to find the tables still filled with players, when at early dawn they came to set the house in order. In fact, Harrowgate, with its delightful balls, its continual round of gaiety, its parties of pleasure to the different places of note around, and the interest consequent upon the various celebrated men upon the turf who used to hold their periodical visitations there, was one of the most amusing places of resort in the kingdom. As I arrived at the entrance of the village of High Harrowgate from Ripon, I was met by an orderly dragoon, who had been despatched with an official letter from the commanding officer, desiring me to halt with my detachment until further orders at this watering place, and I found myself billeted at the house I had in my boyish days so frequently heard of, "The Dragon at Harrowgate."

It was 'about the hour of noon when I

halted my power before the little terrace upon which some of the company were assembled.

The arrival of a party of dragoons upon the march, who were to be billeted in the village, the officer quartering himself at their home, was an event which of course produced quite a sensation amongst the idlers of a fashionable resort; and all the circumstance and appearance of my "plump of spears" lent me so much favour in the eyes of the assemblage, that I found myself quite the lion of the hotel.

It was on the evening of my first day at Harrowgate, that the tables being drawn, it was "idlesse all." The gentlemen were gradually leaving their wine-flagons in the dining-room, and joining the ladies, who, seated at a long table, were preparing to make tea. At the Green Dragon at Harrowgate there was generally a sort of *prima donna*, who led the ton, without whose approval a new-comer would be likely to find his stay rendered not only unpleasant, but even (if an upstart *parvenu*) impossible. Many an unfortunate wight was

fain to retire from the aristocratic Dragon in these days, and betake himself to the Manchester Warehouse, as the Crown Inn was called.

After going through my stable duties, I lounged into the tea-room, and made my way to the upper end. About a dozen ladies were generally employed in the business of tea-making, each having her little tray before her, furnished with appliances and means to furnish forth to some twenty applicants for the beverage; and thus managed, it was an introduction to the company, and made the whole party intimate as one family.

The Marchioness of Richborough was seated at the end of the room as I approached. Beside her was another lady, who officiated in pouring out tea and coffee to the various applicants who bowed at her shrine. The Marchioness was a beautiful woman, of some six or seven-and-twenty years of age, with the form of a goddess, and the brow of a queen.

The clatter of my approach, being in uniform, drew the eye of the Marchioness upon me, and with the eye of her Ladyship, necessarily I was

honoured by the observance of that portion of the company immediately around her.

It was a critical moment for the new arrival, if he cared for being in good odour amongst the assemblage, for the Marchioness of Richborough was the leader of the ton. Had her Ladyship bent but a supercilious eye-brow upon the cornet, after putting her glass to her eye, he would have been voted not the thing in her presence, and perhaps cut by the company. As it was, she desired her lovely friend to pour out a cup of coffee for the officer of the——th, and desiring her husband the Marquis, who was conversing with some ladies near, to invite me to the table, made room for me beside herself.

Although I knew neither the name nor the high rank of the beautiful creature I was sitting beside, we were as intimate in five minutes as if we had been acquainted for five years. The high bred and the exalted in rank sometimes dare to overstep the *triste* manners of English society, and permit those who they approve to a close and quick intimacy. My hussar jacket was in some sort my passport, and my appearance and good mien seconded that; so

that the Marchioness condescended to be affable, and entertained me with the history of two or three of the assembled company.

“You shall know the natives of the strand you are cast upon,” she said. “That lady, with the five raw-boned, tartar-faced daughters is the wife of Sir Mungo McTurk. She has visited this *table d’hôte* six several seasons, and each season has got off one of her fair daughters. There is a determination to succeed about Lady McTurk that is most praiseworthy, and she will succeed again accordingly. That’s her victim, the heavy-looking youth who is seated beside her youngest unmarried. That odd-looking farmer-like man, who is railing against the old lady making tea for him, calling the hotel a pot-house, and all assembled rogues and vagabonds, is the celebrated Joe Armstrong, a great man on the turf, and descended from one of the oldest families in Yorkshire. Beside him, silent, good-tempered-looking, and unassuming, is the Marquis of Queensferry. He is quietly waiting the St. Ledger, that he may lose his customary ten thousand before he returns to town. The lady on the other side, with the melancholy-looking brace

of daughters, is the celebrated Lady Merrimoth, the great whist-player. She has been known to sit up, with slight intermission, for a whole week at a time here. To-night you will see her with bank notes in her lap piled nearly to her chin, and setting the fee-simple of an estate, upon the turn-up of a card. The two young ladies, her offspring, she generally dispatches to a boarding-school at hand, whilst the season lasts. To-night they have a half holiday, in consequence of our intended ball at the Dragon. Her career is given in a line of the immortal Pope, 'a youth of folly, an old age of cards.'

"That old gentleman, who looks so nervous and diffident, with the pigtail, powdered hair, and old-world coat, is a retired member of your profession, a half-pay dragoon. He joined the third Dragoons in the year 1760, and, however you may smile and doubt, it is a well-known fact, that his mother brought him to the regiment, and herself placed him in charge of the colonel. He was an only son, and the sweet youth, being heir to a large patrimony here in Derbyshire, took a fancy for the profession of arms. Being a perfect cousin Slender, he was accompanied as I have mentioned; remained in

the regiment some six or seven years, and, on the breaking out of the war, his mother 'sold him out', and fetched him back to Mostyn Hall. There sits 'the deliberate simpleton,' a perfect representative of Sir Walter Scott's Dumbdikes. I can no more," said the Marchioness, preparing to rise. "The rest are all people of some note in the country, and doubtless will develope themselves for your especial amusement and edification. Flora, my love, come," she said to her companion, "we must even prepare for the coming assembly, as I suppose it will be expected of us to make our appearance."

Saying this, my fair friend arose, and left the tea-table, followed by the nymph, her friend.

"Pray who is that lady?" I inquired of a tall military-looking man standing near.

"Is it me you are asking?" returned Major O'Doherty. "Come, that's droll any how; and you, too, been as intimate with her as if you'd been her next of kin. By the powers! I've been here at the Dragon three weeks, and sitting at table only six from her, and never exchanged so much as may I have the honour of wine with your Ladyship? By the Lord! I've never been able to conciliate an acquaintance in all that

time, and you've been learning the history of all the folks in the house from her own sweet, condescending lips, (lips that I have never kissed, nor ever shall), and now ask me her name. Sure it's funning you are. Why it is the Marchioness of Richborough, and her friend, Lady Flora Clinton. By Jasus ! man, you're in luck ; by the same token, she's taken a fancy to your spurs and sabretash."

"Her Ladyship's something caustic in her remarks upon us to-night, Major," said a Scotch Baronet, who had been seated near us, and who now joined in the conversation : "she is o'er fond of the tables hersel, to be so severe upon Lady Merrimoth. Troth but she's like eneugh hersel to make the Marquis's woods feel the axe, an she lose as mickle every season as she has done this. Gad ! but she's a right vent'rous player. Heard ye, mon, o' the match she's to play the night ?"

"By the powers you say true," returned the other, "it is to-night she plays, and by my conscience, it's near the hour."

As these gentlemen carried on their discourse now in an under tone I left my place, and the company now also beginning to disperse, I strolled

out into the village. On my return, seeing the billiard-room lighted up, I entered it. The room, which those who have ever frequented the Dragon will remember is at one end of the terrace, was on this occasion filled with company, who sat and stood almost two deep around it. A match of some importance I therefore conjectured was being played, and elbowing my way to the front, was sufficiently astonished at seeing my beautiful friend the Marchioness as one of the players ; whilst the Marquis, her spouse, standing beside the marker, officiated for him in the duty of scoring up the game.

The match was for a large sum I found on inquiry, and the opponent of the fair Marchioness was a professed gamester, who had somehow in the liveliness of conversation inveigled her into it ; having come from London with his associates, for the very purpose of pigeoning the lady. He was, besides, a gentleman who prided himself vastly upon his reputation as a duellist, having shot several opponents in the various affairs of honour in which he had been engaged. The indelicacy of playing billiards with a lady for large stakes, who had evidently little more skill in the mace than the bagatelle-

table had given her, was great ; but it was evident to me, as well as to the whole room, that the *leg* was taking advantage of her ignorance of the game to win to a large amount. The Marquis seeming, however, amused as he indulged his lively spouse, and the attendant company appearing unwilling to interfere, I remained quietly for a space to watch the game.

“A hundred pounds to five, I make this hazard,” said Captain Surecard.

“I’ll take it,” said the Marchioness.

“Not so,” said one of the spectators ; “he can’t miss it. Cry off, Lady Richborough.”

“Silence, Sir !” cried the Captain, angrily. “Her Ladyship wants no advice of yours ; she has accepted my bet. I’ll not allow any person to interfere with my game.”

The Captain played, and won the hazard.

“A foul stroke, Sir,” said I immediately.

“A what ?” cried the Captain, turning fiercely round. “Who spoke when I was playing ? Not you ?”

“I spoke, Sir,” said I, pushing to the front ; “I said that was a foul stroke. I repeat the observation.”

The Captain stood aghast for the moment. At length he threw down his cue, and strode towards me.

"I'll bet you a hundred guineas, Sir," said he, "you don't utter another word whilst I am playing."

"Who shall say me nay?" returned I, smiling at his face of ire.

The Marchioness laughed outright, for the scene perfectly delighted her.

The Captain, livid with rage, continued to gaze at me as if ruin leaped from his eyes.

"Proceed, Sir, with your game," said I, "the table waits. I'll take your bet; done's the word. A hundred guineas upon it."

The Captain strode to the table, took up his cue, and was about to strike his ball; as he did so, I stepped up to the table.

"Another foul stroke, by heaven!" said I.

The *leg* threw down his cue, and turned like lightning towards me, whilst three or four of the company started from their seats.

"I believe, Sir, I am winner," said I; "the bet was a cool hundred."

"Your card, Sir!" roared the duellist; "by Heaven, I'll teach you a lesson for this!"

I handed him a card immediately.

"'Tis well," said he; "look to yourself, young man, your life is spanned. I am Captain Surecard."

In saying this he evidently thought that the very sound of his awfully celebrated name would strike me all of a heap; but, as at that time I had neither heard of his name nor his skill, it failed to do so.

"Look you to yourself, Captain Surecard," said I, growing warm with the debate, "and somewhat moderate your tone, or perchance I may teach you a lesson here which will cool your vehemence. Meanwhile, respect the presence of the lady, Sir. Continue your game, and beware how you attempt foul play, or by heaven I'll unmask you the instant I see you take advantage."

The duellist was completely confounded, his jaw dropped as he stared the astonishment he felt, and turning he resumed his cue.

"You shall hear, Sir," said he, with shut teeth, "soon as I have finished my match. Meanwhile, do not leave the room."

The game proceeded, and to the delight of the lively Marchioness, such was the nervous

agitation consequent upon the rage and discomfort of her opponent, that (as he gave large odds) owing to his missing almost every hazard, the tables were completely turned, and she won every game.

"You'll be at the ball," said she, as she quitted the room with her husband. "Come quickly, I'm uneasy at this business. Leave the room with us now."

"I'll follow your Ladyship," said I, when without the room, "in a few minutes."

"Lord Richborough," continued the Marchioness, addressing her husband, "remain with Mr. Blount. The chances are, that being strange here, he may need a friend. I'm sorry, for my sake, you have involved yourself in this broil, Mr. Blount; but his Lordship must see you through it. Appoint him your friend."

The good-natured nobleman, who, it appeared, was in the habit of being ruled by his more clever spouse, instantly relinquished the arm of the Marchioness, and taking mine, we turned to re-enter the billiard room. As I did so I was confronted by Major O'Doherty, who instantly accosted me.

"I am commissioned, Sir," said he, "by my

friend Captain Surecard, to desire you will give him an instant meeting; since nothing but your blood can wash out the public insult you have offered him. Name your friend."

"I'll speak to the valiant Captain himself," said I, moving towards him.

"Pardon me, Sir," said the Major, roughly seizing me by the arm; "that's irregular: I cannot allow you to do so."

"Remove your hand, Sir," said I, "instantly from my arm, or I'll knock you down."

"D——n!" said the Major, "do you address this language to me? You shall answer this, Sir."

"When I have satisfied your friend," said I, "I'll attend to you, Major O'Doherty;" saying which, followed by the Marquis, I re-entered the billiard-room.

It was now in some little confusion, and the company in high debate. Captain Surecard had many gambling partizans present, but the majority of the company were sporting gentlemen, who, formed into little knots, discussed the recent transaction. The Captain and his friends were meantime loud in debate; and

walking to the end of the room where they were, I confronted my man.

"You have sent a friend to me, Sir," said I, "have you not?"

"I have, Sir," roared the duellist; "I demand an instant meeting."

"Doubtless; the sooner we meet the better: that we may do so speedily, as I believe I am winner of a hundred pounds, I demand its instant payment."

"I shall not do so," returned the *leg*. "Give me satisfaction for the affront you have offered. Here is my friend; appoint one on your side, instantly, before worse befall you."

"Not till you pay me the money won," I replied, coolly.

"To the devil with your winnings!" said the Captain, working himself into a rage; "it was no bet. Meet me, Sir, or by heavens! I post your name in this very billiard-room, and all over Harrowgate as a poltroon. Marker, pen, ink and paper, by heaven, I'll stick you up here this instant, unless you accept my challenge."

"And I, Sir," said I, "in return for your intended favour, beg to inform you, that if you

put pen to paper to do so, I will beat you into a jelly with this billiard cue I hold in my hand. Your blackguardism will not serve with me, Captain Surecard, nor shall you leave this spot, until you have acknowledged or paid the debt of honour you have incurred. After which, I will render you satisfaction across this billiard-table if it be your wish. Suffice it, Sir, I remember you now. A certain Captain Catchflat was once your companion, if I mistake not. Think not, Sir," I continued, "that I mean to evade a meeting; for as soon as you have settled this debt, I will appoint Lord Richborough my friend."

The duellist was struck. His overbearing style left him, and he turned to consult his friends. Meanwhile, I placed myself near the door, in order to intercept his retreat; for I determined to make an example of this fellow, who, I firmly believed, was as great a villain as his some-time companion, my London friend. Several of the gentlemen present now gathered around me, and upheld the course I was pursuing.

The Marquis, meanwhile, who had quietly watched the proceeding in his easy, good-tem-

pered way, which formed a striking contrast to my excited style, addressed me, taking my arm, and leading me aside, as he did so.

"You have overturned my plans entirely, young man," he said, "by this proceeding. It was my intention that this bullying scoundrel should fleece my wife; for which purpose, I sanctioned his playing the match you interrupted. The Marchioness of Richborough has suddenly contracted a violent passion for play, which will, unless nipped in the bud, ruin her health and happiness. It has been my system, whilst here at Harrowgate, to allow of her being plucked and pigeoned by these watering-place sharpers in every possible way, in order to show her the folly of the thing. *Voilà!* it is now finished for the present. This business interrupts it, and we must arrange that at once. It is unfortunate as it stands, because as an affair must now take place, I ought naturally to stand as principle, instead of second."

"My Lord," said I, "I beg ten thousand pardons for my intemperate zeal. I certainly am, without exception, the most unlucky dog in the universal world."

"Say no more," said his Lordship, laughing. "The course you have pursued with this man is the right one. He must pay you first, that's concluded."

Major O'Doherty now approached ; upon which, I instantly introduced the Marquis as my friend.

"Does Cornet Blount still demand payment of the bet he asserts he has won, before he consents to meet Captain Surecard ?" said the Major.

"Decidedly, Major," said the Marquis. "He demands instant payment of the hundred pounds he has won ; after which, I am ready, on his part, to arrange a meeting."

"That, then, is the sum," said the Major, placing in my hand bank-notes to the amount. "See, Sir, that they are right."

I took the notes ; and after counting, returned them to the hands of Major O'Doherty.

"It is sufficient," said I. "Give back the money to your principal, with this further message, that although I know him to be a practised gamester, and an abominable cheater, for my own satisfaction, not his, mind you, after

what has passed, I choose to grant him the meeting. The Marquis of Richborough will arrange matters with you."

So saying, I turned upon my heel, and left the billiard-room.

When I entered the hall of the hotel, I found a servant, apparently waiting me, who delivered a note from the Marchioness, desiring me to favour her with a visit in her sitting-room.

I found her ready dressed for the ball; playing with her only child, before she dismissed it to its bed. Anything more lovely than the mother and child, you might search sea and land without being able to discover. The child was about four years old, and beautiful as Cupid; whilst the mother might have formed a study in her voluptuous beauty for the Queen of Love herself.

She rose to receive me as soon as I entered.

"I am glad you are come," said she; "for I have been very uneasy. My somewhat indelicate match with yonder gambler, has led you into a serious scrape, I fear. Tell me, is it all amicably arranged. I know Richborough so well, and his tact and management, that I am sure

he has settled everything without disagreeables of any sort."

Of course, I assured her that she was right.

"It will be a lesson to me," said she; "and in order that I may not suffer in your good opinion, you shall know the folly which made me commit the further indiscretion of playing a public match in the billiard-room of the Dragon. My throne here is troubled, like all other thrones, by an adverse faction. Lady Macdonald heads this cabal; and being surrounded by a clique of sanctified tabbies, and *parvenu beaux*, they carp at all my doings, rail at my followers, and hold up their hands in horror at all the amusements by which I seek to keep my subjects from *ennui*, and ease the anguish of the torturing hours of a watering-place. The fact of my having once or twice lost a few paltry hundreds at whist, has been so animadverted upon, that, in order to show my contempt for their narrow ideas, I resolved to play a match at billiards for a couple of hundred pounds, and thus 'out-Herod Herod' in recklessness of their contempt."

The Marquis now entering the room, I arose

to accompany him, in order to hear the result of his arrangement of time and place.

"There is no occasion for us to quit the apartment," said he, answering my look and motion. "Luckily for you there is to be no fight. The company attendant at the instigation of that eccentric Joe Armstrong, have voted that your antagonist should be expelled this hotel, together with his associates. The publicity your affair has given them, has completely blown them. It is therefore settled that they leave the Dragon forthwith, or they will be kicked out; and a committee have settled that you are *not* to meet Captain Surecard. If you do, you will yourself be expelled. As your friend I have settled, therefore, everything on your part honourably and properly."

Greatly relieved, I poured forth my thanks to the Marquis, who retired to prepare for the ball-room, committing the Marchioness to my escort, and taking his boy in his arms.

CHAPTER X.

The beginning, the middle, the end of love, is nothing but sorrow, vexation and misery.

ANON.

Still flows the tide of my unhappiness,
The stars shoot mischief.

OLD PLAY.

AN affair of this sort naturally cemented my intimacy with the Marchioness of Richborough, whose lovely manners, innocence and beauty, made her a dangerous companion to a young man of my disposition. Although I could have sworn, by Cupid's strongest bow, "by his best arrow with the golden head," that no face or form could ever have driven the impression of Miss Villeroy from my heart, I fear the lovely Marchioness was for the time all powerful, and that I thought not, whilst in her society, of my former vows.

O Heaven ! were man but constant he were perfect,
That one error fills him with faults.

Suffice it, that no party of pleasure was formed, no amusement projected, in which I was not her companion and aid-de-camp. To be thus, and not to love, was not to be mortal. Yet, although this heavenly paragon hung upon my arm during our walks in the day, danced with me at night, and selected me as her partner in every amusement she was engaged in, whatever of love was in our hearts, there was no word of it crossed our lips.

I loved and was beloved again

that was apparent to me from a thousand signs and tokens, which lovers as surely discover, as that they live and move.

As is generally the case in such cases, all the world saw it but him who was most interested ; and the good-natured and amiable Marquis, finding his lovely wife so well amused and so happy, set off to see his horse start for the St. Ledger, and lose his money at Doncaster.

. It was on the third day after his departure, that Lady Richborough and myself, watching the splendour of the setting sun, were seated

upon the turf, amidst the trees and shrubs in the gardens of Plumpton. Those who have ever visited Harrowgate will remember this lovely spot ; the gardens of Plumpton being one of the places always shewn to the visitors.

The Marchioness had headed a pic-nic party there that day, some few individuals of which had left, and others were sauntering and amusing themselves in different parts of the grounds, just before they returned homewards. The Marchioness and myself were seated upon a verdant bank which overlooked the lake ; a romantic legend was attached to the place, which was called the Lover's leap. Something of the story I remembered, and pointed out to my companion how, in bye-gone days, a youthful hunter, in leaping upon a jutting fragment of rock, which was detached from the promontory we sat on, and at the same time held his blood-hounds in the leash, (the dogs having refused the leap,) dragged him backwards in the attempt, and before the eyes of his beloved he was dashed against the rocks, and drowned in the lake.

The romance of the story and the beauty of the scene delighted us. The only child of my fair hearer was with us: indeed, in all her excursions that beautiful boy was her companion. It seemed, indeed, that she lost enjoyment of the hour if he was from her sight. The proud feeling, however, of having been thus elected by this highly gifted and beautiful woman as her intimate, and allowed to be to her as a brother, was almost too much for any man to bear, and "keep the disposition that he owed." As I kissed the bright and laughing boy who played in my arms, I kissed him for his mother's sake.

The little varlet now screaming and laughing like a sprite, and clambering up my back in his playful mood, made the groves around echo with his joyous laugh and shriek of perfect delight. One moment he pelted us with the sweet summer buds he plucked from the bank on which we were seated, and the next he started off and hid himself from sight in the covert of some clump of evergreens close at hand. For awhile, the doating mother watched him with her beaming eyes, echoed his laugh with

her own musical voice, and encouraged his engaging mirth, rising every now and then to chase him into some bosky retreat ; at length, wearied with the sport, she bade him amuse himself whilst she rested, desiring the attendant nursemaid to seek for and summon her carriage. "Hence," said she, playfully, to the beautiful boy, "hence to kill cankers in the musk rose bud, or 'war with rear mice for their leathern wings.' Go kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle."

Seating herself, she leaned her cheek upon her hand, as her eye wandered over the bright waters of the lake, and watched the splendour of the setting sun, with the pine woods on its margin, empurpled, shadowy, and massive-looking, as the glorious orb sank to rest.

"O that I were a glove upon that hand," methought, as I gazed upon her half-averted and chiselled features, 'That I might touch that cheek.'

I know not whether I had given any part of my thoughts tongue, or whether the Marchioness guessed my admiration from my silence, but she suddenly turned her head,

and our eyes met. The expression of mine betrayed me as clearly as if I had written a volume; and her pure and eloquent blood spoke in her cheeks. The embroidered glove I so much admired, was in my hand: unconsciously I had retained it, whilst the sportful boy had fought me with it in his joyous mirth. She put out her hand for it, smiling in the innocence of her heart, only as such a radiant creature could smile. "Sweet ornament, that decks a thing divine," said I, as I resigned it. In doing so, our hands met, and seizing upon the snowy offering I carried it to my lips. I could hardly think on what I had done, I feared the Marchioness would be offended at my boldness; look on her again I dared not.

The next moment, uttering a piercing cry, with eyes like a maniac's starting from their sockets, she leaped up from the bank she had been seated upon, and stood on tiptoe, the personification of some nymph suddenly gone distracted.

Hark! was that the dipping of the teal-duck in the bright waters of the lake, or was it the splash of the otter beneath the rock. A

sort of wailing cry disturbed the silence of the grove as I gazed upon the lady in awe, astonishment, and fear. The truth flashed upon my mind in an instant. It was her beautiful, her own. Little Lord Eskdale, had fallen into the lake. With the speed of thought I leapt to my feet, cleared the intervening space between where I had been seated, and bounding from the promontory, stood upon the isolated fragment of rock which rose from the sedgy lake, and looked around.

The situation commanded the base of the rocks for some distance, and beyond a jutting promontory near at hand, I beheld a dissolving circle scarcely defined, in the water, some fifty yards from the spot on which I stood. Marking well the spot, I once more adventured the hunter's leap, and untrammelled by his dogs, regained the promontory. The Marchioness was nowhere to be seen. I thought not of her, but dashing through the bushes in my descent, like one possessed with a demon, I made for the margin of the lake, and plunged headlong in ; had it been a sea of flaming brimstone, I should have done the same.

So well had I marked the spot, that the child's hat was the first thing I beheld floating before me, as I rose to the surface, and instantly diving, I saw, seized, and brought him up. To gain the bank with my prize, was then but the work of a few minutes, and to my joy, I saw that the boy was still alive. His clothes had spread wide, and mermaid-like awhile they bore him up. He had but just sunk, when I dived, and reclaimed him. My delight at having saved the beautiful son of the Marchioness, the next moment gave place to fear. Where was the Marchioness herself? I had observed her dart down the vista she had last seen her child playing in before; she had forgotten him in contemplation of the glorious sunset. The path she had taken led to a part of the rock, which beetled over the lake.

Surmising the dreadful truth, I shouted for assistance, and resigning the young Lord to the nursery-maid, who at that moment flew to the spot, I threw off my coat, and once more took to the stream. It was, however, in vain that I dived and swam around the spot like some Newfoundland dog in search of a stone :—

the depths of the lake retained their prey; and oh, vulgar death for one so lovely! the Marchioness, like Ophelia, was drowned.

It was the morning after this untoward event, that I was seated in the private sitting-room of my sometime beautiful friend, at the Dragon, at Harrowgate. The Marquis was with me. He had been summoned from Doncaster by express. His little boy was in his arms; and to his repeated demand for his dear mamma, the Marquis had but one answer—his flowing tears. It was the first ten minutes of our meeting since his arrival, and the catastrophe. He had sent to me on the instant of his coming; and, like a culprit who had done a murder, I attended his summons. Four reeking posters stood at the inn-door, with his travelling-carriage, their distended nostrils and steaming flanks, telling the rate at which he had travelled.

“This has been a dreadful business, Sir,” said he, as he arose and paced the room; “a dreadful and melancholy termination to our visit here. Nor can I altogether understand it, although you have told the tale over to me six several times. Oh, unhappy chance,

that took me to that cursed race ! You saved my boy, and I thank you. But oh, Sir, how have I deserved that this affliction should light so heavily upon men ? How could these things occur ?”

The Marquis here became so much moved, that he sank in the chair beside him, and I arose and took the child from his arms. After a while, he subdued his emotion, and again addressing me, in an irritable tone. “How,” said he, “is it possible that such an accident could have occurred, when you say three persons were with the child. Where was the maid at that moment ?”

I told him : “Sent to summon the carriage.”

“The rest of this cursed pic-nic party,” he continued, “were away, you say ; had left the gardens. Humph !—strange, to say the least of it ; and the Marchioness and yourself—gazing at the sun setting upon the lake ; and the child was—I need not ask—in *the lake* ! Summon that nurse,” said he, rising, and ringing the bell violently.

The menial appeared, like Niobe, all tears. At sight of her master, she managed to burst

into a roar, like a wild Indian—the usual practice with persons of this sort.

“Silence ! woman,” said the Marquis sternly. “I know the value of your grief of old, well as I now know the value of your services. Your tears are now no longer worth shedding—you are no longer servant of mine. I sent for you to hear *your* version of this affair, not to hear your screams.”

“My Lord,” said I, “this is unkindly said. I have uttered the plain unvarnished truth in this business ; and, could my life have repaired it, I had died to save—”

“Grief, like impatience, Sir,” said the Marquis, interrupting me, “hath its privilege. What made you, mistress,” he continued, turning to the nurse, “leave your charge, whilst this gentleman entertained my wife?”

“My Lady’s order, Sir, to seek the carriage,” returned the sobbing nurse. “Oh, lor ! oh, lor ! kill me, Sir, if you will, but don’t say another angry word to me. Don’t blame me for it, or I shall die raving mad. Oh, dear !”

“Your mistress had the child with her, then ? You left it in her charge ?”

“Yes, Sir,” said the servant. “She bade Lord Eskdale go and catch mice and humble bees amongst the thistles ; those were her very words. Oh, my God ! I shall never forget them, if I live to be a thousand years old. As I returned from the gate, alarmed by this gentleman’s cries, I ran to the spot, and found them all three in the water together. What happened after that, God only knows, for I swooned clean away. When the men-servants hastened to my assistance, they dragged this gentleman out of the lake, almost drowned.”

“Enough, enough !” said the Marquis ; “say no more. Fresh horses, for Plumpton. Needham,” said he to his attendant ; “remain, and settle all accounts here, and follow me to-night to Ferrybridge. Farewell, Mr. Blount,” said he, turning to me. “Once more, I thank you for your exertions in favour of this poor child. Pardon me, however, for expressing the wish that we had never met, and the still further hope that we may never meet again. That my conduct may not appear tinged with eccentricity in saying this, I can but in justice to yourself put these letters in your hand. Being any-

mous, I should not have noticed them, but for this catastrophe, which to say truth gives some slight colour to their contents. I have, however, myself more to blame than any other person. Farewell !”

So saying, the Marquis left the room with his child ; and proceeding to Plumpton, spent the day in superintending the process of dragging the lake for the body of his wife. His exertions, however, were not destined to be crowned with success ; and broken-hearted and disconsolate, he returned to his estate in the North, from whence he never again emerged, either to partake of the pleasures of a season at Harrowgate, or to enter into any other diversion whatever.

The anonymous letters he had received, were pointing at myself as entertaining dishonourable designs upon the Marchioness ; and desiring him, if he valued his honour, to return at once from Doncaster. They were signed merely with the feigned name of BACON.

Such, gentle reader, were the results of my first visit to the celebrated Dragon at Harrowgate. I cannot say altogether, however, the result ;

since I have to record other matters appertaining, which in their relation will show the degrees that helped the consummation of my fall in life.

It may easily be surmised that the little episode I have just narrated would give me a distaste for the amusements of this watering-place. It did so ; and, indeed, threw a gloom over the assembled company at the Dragon to so great a degree, that three parts of them shortened their visit, packed up their travelling apparatus, and departed. I should have left the place myself, had it been in my power to do so ; but, it will be remembered that I was detached there on duty, and consequently had no choice. However, as I could not cut the place, I determined to remove my billet, and accordingly betook me to the inn at Lower Harrowgate, mostly inhabited and resorted to by invalids who came there for the benefit of the waters.

At the Crown, therefore, I located myself ; and well did the Crown at Low Harrowgate at that period deserve the name of the Hospital ; since the first day I sat down to dinner at the long table, I had a perfect surfeit of ill-favoured

visages. The waters of Low Harrowgate are famous for cutaneous and other affections of the skin ; consequently, I beheld at table a community of personages so Bardolph-like in visage, that like that worthy corporal, each person's face seemed Lucifer's privy kitchen, and was covered with welks, and knobs, and tubercles, as Fluellin hath it. The hotel was slow, too, I found after the lively Dragon. No sporting colonel, full of jest and repartee, set the table in a roar. No sparkling Baronet lost his money upon one of a brace of maggots he found in his cracked filbert. No Lord Falconberg brought his hawks there from Falcon Hall, and invited the company to witness the sport upon the common beside the inn. No Sir Martin Bustard betted his thousand pounds upon the feat of clambering up the side of the inn, and entering the window of one of the chambermaid's rooms upon the roof, with no assistance in the ascent save what he obtained from a slippery clutch with his hands upon whatever coign of vantage could be grasped in the masonry of the stone building perilling his neck for the amusement of the company, performing a seeming act of impossible daring, and making up his losings at

the card-table for the week, by the feat. In fact, the life and gaiety of the Dragon of that day unfitted me for the water-drinking and somewhat serious visitors of the Crown; and albeit I was myself rather sad and dispirited at the late events, and mourned the sad fate of my lovely friend, with a sincerity, which for a time unfitted me for the amusements of a watering-place, yet still I found myself insensibly led back to the Dragon and my friends there, in a sort of morning visit each successive day I remained.

High play, I have said, was constantly carried on at the Dragon, and, during my morning visits in this melancholy mood I frequently spent whole days in watching the whist-players. Captain Catchflat, during our brief intercourse, had somewhat inoculated me with a love of gambling, which however, but for the accident at Plumpton, and its consequently rendering me unfitted for a time for out-door amusements, might never have ripened to maturity. Now, however, after watching the game, I insensibly found myself compelled to cut in; and the vice once indulged in, again became a passion. Morning after morning, therefore, found me treading

those delightful fields which lead from Low Harrowgate to the pleasant garden-entrance in rear of the Dragon, and night after night found me absorbed in the card-room, playing for stakes that would have been ruinous to a peer of the realm, if long unsuccessful.

My career among the gamblers at Harrowgate was short. The constant ill luck which had so followed and made calamity of my life pursued me at the tables, with great malignancy; play at what I would, good cards fled my hands, and bank-notes my pockets. If, in cutting for partners, I gained Lady Merrimoth, the bank-notes disappeared from her lap, and the accustomed trumps and honours from her hand.—If, on the contrary, she was my opponent, the one was as sure to gladden her eyes, as the others were to accumulate to their usual height—her nose. What Cassio says of drink might almost be applied to gambling, “O thou invisible spirit of play, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee—devil.”

At first I did but seek the tables, because the sounds of mirth and revelry were uncongenial to my state of mind. In fact, I had lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercise, and

sought a temporary oblivion from thought in endeavouring to interest myself by observing others engaged at high play. The very countenances of those I beheld absorbed in this all powerful fascination, instead of appalling, at first amused me; till gradually drawn into the whirlpool, I was sucked in amongst the victims. My career, however, was short, as I said, and I arose one morning, after a day and night of hard play, not only completely cleared out, but loser of a large sum, over and above what I could pay.

"Count Savinski," I said, to the Pole I had been playing with, "I find myself now debtor to the tune of ——".

"Yetz, Sare," said the Pole, "precisely dat. But it not mattare. Play on, pay to-morrow. Come, let's have fretch cards. Sit down, Monsieur, your turn now. Suppose *you* win a leetle dis next bout,—your game is to come now. *Ecarté, s'il vous plait.*"

"Not so, Count," said I, "'tis of no avail, I have tried that game too long. There is my I. O. U. for the sum. I have it not about me, and must write for it."

So saying, I arose and drew up the blinds.

“By Gor, it is to-morrow,” said the Count.
“If you no play more, I go to bed, that’s all.”

As there was no other flat to take a hand with the Pole, he retired to his apartment ; whilst I, seizing pen, ink, and paper, commenced a letter to my father, for a remittance to save my honour.

Before I had written three lines, however, deep shame stayed my pen. “No,” said I, as I arose and walked the apartment, “I will not subject myself to a refusal.—I will not confess my frailty. Since I have thus made an ass of myself, at least I know how to suffer for my folly. There is, however, no occasion to make a second sensation in this hotel, by disturbing “the curtained sleep” with the report of the pistol I make my quietus with—I can manage it otherwise. I must bid adieu to the hussars. My dear and much esteemed comrades I must part from, and cut the cavalry, for the flat foots.”

So saying, I resumed my pen, and addressing a letter to an army agent in town, requested him to procure me an exchange instantly, into a regiment in one of the most unhealthy of the West India Islands, naming the difference

I required, and which would repay Savinski his infernal winnings in one last *sedérunt*.

Exchanges at that time of day were easily effected. The army agent had but to turn over a few pages of his book. Select the man suitable, write a letter or two, and the thing was done.

CHAPTER XI.

Ere the bat hath flown,
His cloistered flight; ere, to black Hecate's summons,
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

SHAKSPERE.

WHILST this business was transacting, as it necessarily was known to my Colonel, I received several letters of remonstrance at my intent to leave him; and also others equally gratifying from all my brother officers. Nay, Colonel Gauntlet, mounting his charger, galloped over from York to try and shake my purpose, and I beheld him, to my surprise, dismounting at the inn door, as I was dressing for the table d'hôte.

"My dear Blount, what is all this," said the fine old soldier, grasping my hand. "What in the devil's name induces you to leave us?—

You, the favourite of the regiment; by heavens you've been the life of the corps since you joined. We cannot lose you. Is it that you dislike us, or does some matter of a private nature thus induce you to commit suicide by going to St. Kitts?"

"I'll be candid with you, Colonel," said I, "there's no choice left me. Heaven knows how I love the —th, and all my brother officers. In losing yourself, Colonel, I lose one I love, I almost fear, as well as I do my own father; for from you I have experienced the most generous and affectionate friendship since the hour I knew you. To say truth, I ought never to have joined the hussars, as I cannot afford it. This, therefore, has but anticipated our parting. In few, I have lost money here which I cannot pay, without assistance from my father. Not being on terms with my family, I have taken the only means in my power to extricate myself from the difficulty."

"Not the only means, my dear boy," said the Colonel, "for had you written this to me, I dare say I could have assisted you. Come, name the sum, and if I can do so, I'll let you have it by to-morrow morning."

"Not for worlds, Colonel," said I, "since I could never repay it again, I fear, unless I disposed of my commission. Heaven bless you for your offer! but cease to urge it."

"Perish the paltry sum!" cried the generous old soldier, "you never shall offer to repay it, unless you mean to insult me."

With tears in my eyes, I wrung his hand.

"Nay, then," said he, "if it be so, we must part with you. But you are wrong, young man, in being thus headstrong. Had I time I would write to your father myself upon the subject, and put you under arrest till I got his answer. But to-morrow's post you say will bring your letter with an advance from your agent."

"'Tis even so, my dear Sir," said I, "and now let us order dinner in a private apartment, since I had rather enjoy your company, tête-à-tête, than dine with you at the table d'hôte."

We accordingly sat down, and took our bottle of claret together. After which, it being a lovely summer's evening, I ordered coffee early, and proposed a stroll.

"I must look at your detachment to-morrow," said the Colonel, "and, as I suppose you will be glad to get away now, as soon as possible,

without waiting to see yourself gazetted out, I must send for Devereux to relieve you."

We strolled through the village of Low Harrowgate, and bent our steps towards the common. There had been a horse-race that evening upon the heath, and the evening sports were just then at high tide. Accordingly, we stopped amongst the throng to observe the diversions going on. It was amusing to see the strict disciplinarian, the high-minded and chivalrous old soldier, who had served in the four quarters of the globe, as much diverted, and entering into the amusements of the bumpkins as the veriest clod-hopper amongst the rout.

"Look! look! for heaven's sake!" he cried, "look at those braw wenches streaming across the common almost in a state of nudity; nothing on them, as I'm a sinner, but their smocks."

"E'es, Zur," said a bumpkin in the crowd, "that is a smock-race. Them wenches are entered to run in their smocks, and her as wins, wins a smock. You may see it there, yander a be hanging at t' winning-post. Yoiks! yoiks! off she goes! Dang my rags, but Mopsy is safe to win. Huzza! I'll bet a pint o' yale,

to a dollop of fat bacon, Mopsy wins the shift."

"They must be marvellously out of linen, worse than Falstaff's regiment," said the Colonel, "before they consent to go through such an ordeal. Let's go, and see the winner. Well done, Cutty Sark," he said, "by Heaven, but you ran well, Mopsy, and so did you, Betsy, and you too, Maud, and Marian, Bridget, and Bess. You deserve a round dozen changes of linen, There's half-a-guinea amongst you. Egad, Blount, but she's a well-built filly, that Mopsy, clean upon her pasterns, strong jointed, and amazing good action."

"E'es, Zur," said the bumpkin, "she's a brave wench, is Moll—a tightish craft. Don't 'e be chucking she under the chin, Zur, she and I do keep company, we do."

"There, stand aside, for I be going to climb up this pole here for that leg of mutton o'top. Whoop, Robin. Now for first go."

Dire were the efforts of the Yorkists to swarm up the pole, which being well greased, as fast as one fellow attained nearly within arm's length of the mutton, the efforts at grasping it

caused him to slide down, and another leaping upon his shoulders, struggled up to share the same disappointment. Showers of sand and gravel, however, being at length thrown at the pole by the competitors, one lucky wight succeeded at length in achieving the task, and the leg of mutton, which, like the head of some traitor, had graced the top of the pole, and grinned defiance upon the mob, was in a few minutes torn to pieces and devoured.

Then came fellows to dip their heads in tubs of water for half-crowns, till they were half drowned, and subsequently diving in bags of flour, to grope for shillings, till they were half choked. After that, we had the gratification of witnessing a race after pigs with soaped tails, no cathee no havee. Then came a jingling match, in which some nineteen fellows, (being blind-folded) were started to catch the twentieth, whose eyes were uncovered, with a sheep-bell tied between his legs. The rage and annoyance consequent upon the continual efforts of the blind to catch the fellow with the bell, which at last ended in a most amusing blind fight, greatly amused the Colonel; at last, after seeing a match of

jumping in sacks for a side of bacon, we wended our way onwards.

A beautiful belt of pines bounds this common to the eastward, and through them there are many pleasant walks. Towards these plantations we took our way. The evening breeze was delightful after a somewhat hot and sultry day, and proceeding up one of the shadowy avenues, we beheld in the distance a couple of men advancing at a swift pace towards us.

The hum of the village revel, just distinguishable, sounded cheerily from the distant common, and the occasional shouts of laughter, mingled with the drums and trumpets of the different booths, caused the Colonel frequently to stop and listen, as we sauntered onwards.

“Those mirthful sounds,” said he “from yonder Scotchified heath, remind me forcibly of Sir Walter’s inimitable description of the Wappenshaw in “Old Mortality.” I thought so once or twice as I looked upon the scene; though I know not what Lady Margaret Bellenden would have thought of those slightly-clad wenches running a race for such a garment as the one we saw displayed on yonder pole. ’Tis a pity

these country sports are fast fading away, even from our memories. The age, my dear Sir, is getting too picked. We are refining away all the good old customs of our forefathers. But stay," said he, stopping short, "what companions have we here? Come forward, Sirs," he called aloud to the two men I have mentioned, who, as he turned towards them, instantly stopped, and appeared inclined to retrace their steps.

The Colonel was a soldier of the old school. In all military matters he was an iron man; perhaps he erred in over-strictness. To those who were good soldiers, he was as gentle as zephyrs blowing beneath the violet. But to the malingerer, he was a terrible scourge.

The Colonel, looking like some Templar of old, six feet two in height, a perfect cavalier in figure, his bushy grey moustache covering his mouth like a portcullis, and his white hair cropped close, halted, as his eagle eye fastened upon the two fellows the moment he turned and recognized them, and his shaggy eye-brows beetled, pent-house like, with an ominous frown.

"Come forward, Sirs," said he, in a stern voice.

The men obeyed. As I looked at them, I saw that one was clad in dirty regimentals, whilst the other wore a smock frock, and carried a bundle at the end of a stout cudgel.

They moved quickly up, and endeavoured to pass. The soldier saluted, and the countryman would have done the same; but his comrade, struck his arm down as he made the attempt.

"I thought so," said the Colonel, fixing his eye upon the countryman, and putting out his hand and stopping the soldier. "Whither away so fast, my lads?"

They were both most ill-looking and truculent fellows, dogged and resolute in bearing, and they seemed half inclined, I thought, to rush past us.

"You 're of the 105th, men," said the Colonel, "and stationed at Leeds. What does that fellow masquerading here in countryman's attire?"

"I'm on a few days' leave," said the soldier; "this man's not in the army at all."

"'Tis false," said the Colonel, sharply;

"you 're deserters both: show me your pass, Sir."

The man looked like a demon; his eye flashed fire.

"My pass," he said; "yes, I can soon show you that."

"Do so," said the Colonel, holding out his hand to receive it, as the fellow, putting his hand into the breast of his coat, suddenly drew forth a pistol, and shot him through the heart.

"There's my pass," he said; "b—t your interfering soul."

Almost petrified with horror, I caught the Colonel as he staggered back; whilst the two deserters, leaping through the pines, escaped.

To give any correct idea of what I felt at this moment, is totally out of my power. Encumbered with the dead weight of the Colonel's body in my arms, and covered with his life's-blood, I felt at the moment as if about to swoon myself, and it was some minutes before I was sufficiently collected to consider the best plan to pursue. In laying the body of the Colonel upon the grass, I found that he was quite

dead ; and as soon as I ascertained that fact, I set off in pursuit of the murderers.

There is no necessity to pursue this part of the story ; I willingly pass it over. Suffice it, they were taken, tried, and one of them executed. Meanwhile, I had followed the old soldier, together with my brother officers, to the grave ; and over a braver and more worthy soldier, the volleying musquetry never sounded a requiem.

This event, and the trial of the murderer and his comrade, necessarily detained me some time at York ; and whilst yet staying with my comrades of the hussars, I received a letter from the Adjutant-general, ordering me at the expiration of my present leave, to join the dépôt of the —th, at that time stationed at Fort George, in Inverness-shire. I had therefore, I reflected, just time to run up to London, per mail, order my equipments for the infantry, and start for the north.

As, for a long time, I had heard nothing of my father or his welfare, I resolved to take the Grange in my way, (being now so near it), in order to see how things were progressing there.

Some time ago, I had heard that my mother-in-law had favoured me with a little brother ; and that the whole retinue had returned, and were at home. That, however, was now old news ; and my indomitable pride would not allow of my holding communication with my father. Hitherto I had regularly received my allowance ; and my time had been spent so delightfully with my comrades of the hussars, up to the period of my unfortunate visit to Harrowgate, that I had willingly endeavoured to forget home and all its disagreeables.

Could I have remained a short time longer in the hussars, I had every chance of my lieutenancy, as I had risen to the top of the list of cornets ; but this unfortunate gambling transaction, shook all my buds from blowing ; and in my exchange, I necessarily went down to the bottom of the list of ensigns. However, youth is the season of hope ; and as long as I was master of myself, "lord of my presence, and no land beside," I felt that I ought not to despond, even though hitherto unfortunate.

I felt convinced of the truth of the words of Caius Cassius :

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

And every day, as I reflected upon my past career, I felt convinced that my own want of forethought might have been the cause of the mishaps which had so inevitably followed, dogged the heels, and made shipwreck of all my doings. I set myself, therefore, down as a slight, unweighing chap, without ballast, and infirm of purpose. I subjected myself to a sort of court of inquiry, and found myself convicted of so many trifling misdemeanours, that the whole amounted to a serious want of propriety of conduct, and steadiness of deportment. In fact I had dined at the mess of the —th Hussars, for the last time; had been fêted, complimented, and regretted to the top of my bent; was tolerably overcome with grief, champaign and excitement, and had got into a post-chaise at three o'clock in the morning, so as to steal away clandestinely, and avoid a repetition of leave-taking with my noble-hearted comrades in arms.

Thus was I once again cut adrift, and about to seek my fortune anew. It was a sort of

retrograde movement I had made, as preferment surely awaited me in the hussars, where I was well beloved by the senior officers, and highly esteemed by the juniors. I know not whether it be the same in all cavalry regiments, but in the —th we were a perfect band of brothers. There were none of those petty jealousies, fears of rivalry, bickerings, backbitings, callings out, and courts martial, such as I have since seen. The regiment had been commanded by one who in himself was like Prince Rupert, "*toujours soldat*," the perfection of high honour, chivalrous feelings, and devotion to the service. Stately and precise as the Knight of La Mancha, he had all his knightly feeling without a touch of his insanity. When you add to this, that the officers he commanded were, without exception, gentlemen by birth and fortune, it may easily be conceived, that in any exchange I was likely to make, I stood but little chance of bettering myself, least of all, by such exchange as I had just effected ; since service in the Sugar Islands of the West, during piping times of peace, is so generally disliked by the profession, that it is as a matter of course avoided if possible amongst the gentlemen of the

blade. However, I was now going to the reserve companies of the —th foot, had a few pounds in my pocket with which to carry on the war, and hoped for the best. I trusted to redeem my past errors, and rise in the profession. Once more, then, I sought my home, in order to humble myself before my father, ask his blessing, and then put on towards Scotland.

“ True, hope (said I) is swift, and flies with swallow’s wings.

“ Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.”

As I repeated the lines of the aspiring Richmond, I fell asleep, till, “ first turn, horses out,” awoke me at the end of the stage.

CHAPTER XII.

No ill luck stirring, but what lights o' my shoulders,
No sighs but o' my breathing, no tears but o' my
shedding.

Thou stick'st a dagger in me.—

SHAKSPERE.

THE day had broke some hours as I looked
from the window of the chaise.

“What place is this, boy?” said I.

“Wetherly, Sir,” returned the postilion.

“Don't bring out the horses yet,” said I,
“I am undetermined whether or not I shall
remain here all day. At any rate I shall stop
here to breakfast.” Accordingly I kicked open
the door, and entered the inn.

Mine host ushered me into a comfortable
room, with a cheerful fire blazing on the hearth.
It was a chill morning, and ordering breakfast
to be served immediately, I threw myself into
a chair, and lighted a cigar. I quite agree with

Washington Irving in his commendations of the comfort and independance of an apartment in an inn; a man never, I think, enjoys a meal with greater zest than when, after the fatigue of a journey, he kicks off his boots, thrusts his feet into slippers, and seats himself before the fire of a snug little parlour of a road-side hostel. As I looked out of the window upon the well-kept little garden across the road, whilst I sipped a delicious cup of coffee and demolished the new laid eggs and buttered toast, served by the good-looking hostess, I thought that no man had a right to despond whilst he possessed the means of enjoying the comforts of which I then was partaking.

“Shall I bring in another muffin, Sir?” said the assisting damsel, in accents so gentle and conciliatory, that I felt half inclined to thank her for the offer with a kiss.

“Anything, my pretty lass,” said I, “shall be welcome that is brought me by the handsomest girl in Yorkshire. At the same time I shall be more bounden to you, for the sight of an old newspaper to beguile the time.”

Capriciously did she bend her head on one side, and dance up insidiously, as she returned

with a plate of reeking muffins in one hand, and a newspaper in the other.

The girl was extremely handsome, with cheeks like a rose, and the figure of a nymph. I felt I should be totally wanting in proper feeling not to offer her a salute. I might even have given her two, but in glancing at the paper she thrust almost *at* me as she escaped, I saw that which, handsome as she was, completely banished her from my thoughts. The paragraph which fixed my instant attention in the *York Herald*, was sufficiently interesting ; it was headed, in large letters, thus :—"Conflagration, for the sixth time, of Wharncliffe Grange, and total destruction of the building."

Like the poet Otway, who, it was affirmed, fell a victim to an eleemosynary penny roll, which stuck fast in his epiglottis, I was almost choked with the portion of buttered muffin I had between my teeth the instant before I had read this startling intelligence.

Whilst I stood glaring upon the paper, and reading the account of the catastrophe without comprehending (in my eagerness to gather it all at once) one half that was given, mine host

entered the apartment with a countenance of wrath.

"I ax pardon, Zur, (he said) but you'll excuse I, if I tell'e I won't stand no nonsense to our Cis. She be a good and wartuous lass, Zur, and ain't used to be tumbled and touzled in yonder fashion. You'll excuse I, but you've made a mistake here; I'm jealous. This be the Harewood Arms, and if you've come into it thinking I keep a disrespectable house, you're considerably out, that's all. Cicely is my niece, Zur, and if so be as you're agoing to stay in this house, I'll thank'e to treat her as sitch."

"Landlord," I said, disregarding his anger, "have you a swift horse in your stable?"

"A what, Zur, a good horse? Did you ever know a Yorkshire farmer wi'out a good nag?"

"I see here an account of Wharncliffe Grange being burnt to the ground. Your paper gives few of the particulars of the catastrophe. Do you know any thing about it?"

"Ay, it be old news, that," said the landlord, "It have taken fire five or six times. First the rick-yard was burned; then the out-

houses ; next night, one wing of the house was discovered to be on fire, and when that was put out before day-break, t'other side broke out before night-fall. It is supposed to be the act of an incendiary. They've had constables there for the last week ; and yet, as t' paper there tells us, it's broke out again, and burnt to the ground."

"It is my father's residence, landlord," said I. "I see by this paper that no lives have been lost. Nevertheless, I should like to reach the spot as quickly as possible. As I know this part of the country well, if you will get me a fleet horse, I will cross the country, and reach the Grange in an hour. Forgive the kiss I gave to Cicely, landlord, and help me to a nag for the love of heaven."

"You shall have my own oss," said the host. "I be sorry now I scolded 'e. Here, hostler, bring out the little lass. My certie, but she'll carry you well. So you be young Master Blount," he continued, "be ye ? Lord safe us ! but I'm sorry for yer misfortin. There's t' oss a coming round ; don't spur her, Zur. Fire's a dreadful infliction. Good bye, Zur. I wish you merry."

"There's for your bill, landlord," said I, as I

jumped on his steed. "Send on my baggage by the coach to Abbots Wickford. The Grange burnt down!" said I, as I buried my spurs in my horse's sides. "I am amazed, methinks, and lose my way amidst the thorns and dangers of this world." Having, in former days, often crossed that part of the country after the fox, I made for my sometime home by the shortest cuts, and at full speed.

Clearing the deer-palings at Berrywell Chace, in a few minutes more I dashed through the belt of plantations, and presently drew bridle before the well-known, beloved old moat.

Y The account I had heard was but too correct. The mansion was a heap of smouldering ruins. A sort of falling scaffolding of blackened rafters, smoking galleries, and still burning staircases, hung from every part of the calcined walls of the time-honoured Grange.

The devouring element had done its worst, and the moat, now alas! but a rushy ditch, was in many places half filled with the rubbish of the fortress it had once washed with its protecting water. Some fire-men and labourers were

still keeping up a discharge of muddy water upon the mass of burnt material, as I rode up to inquire about the family, and their place of refuge. I found that they were luckily absent at the time of the conflagration; and as I saw no person I knew amongst the throng, I thought it best to seek old Martha the housekeeper at her cottage without the park walls.

I found her as I expected, with spectacles on nose, and bible in her lap, seated before her door. She looked over her glasses as I pulled up before her, but her eyes were too dim now to recognize me at the moment.

“Any more ill news?” said she, snappishly. “Methinks there is nothing now to add to the catalogue. The old mansion is in a heap of ruins; the estate is sold, they tell me; the master an outlaw, and the son an alien from his father’s heart. What seek you, Sir,” she continued, “of one who has outlived all her hopes and fears? If you have aught to tell me of my child—my young master, it shall be welcome. If not, pass on, and trouble me not.”

“He comes to tell you of his own welfare,

Martha," said I, dismounting. "Your old favourite stands before you."

The old dame threw her bible somewhat irreverently upon the turf before her, as she started up, and locked me in her arms. The next minute my horse was tied to the little gate, and I was seated in her humble cottage. The careful creature closed and bolted her door, before she would seat herself beside me, and answer the questions I poured upon her ear.

"Ah, it's a bad world, Sir," said she, as soon as she had informed me that my father was again abroad with his wife and some of her family, living at a château he had purchased, about twenty miles from Caen, "it's a bad world, Sir. The're queer stories about this fire. I suppose you know young Levison has been at the Grange the whole time during these repeated conflagrations. It's never been whispered, nor have I ever breathed such a thing; but if it has not been done by his hand, it must have been the work of the Evil One."

"I thought that constables had been on the watch, night after night, both within and without the building," said I.

“ And so they have ; himself having the ordering of their stay there ; and himself sitting up to watch, too ; and himself the foremost at patrolling the grounds, taking all sorts of precautions, and swearing that it must be done by some inmate of the house, or the flames could never so mysteriously and continually burst out in so many of the locked-up apartments ; ay, and himself the demon, all the while, that laid combustible and set the match. Nay, I wouldn’t hesitate to swear that it was that incarnate devil who has done the mischief, even before the whole world.”

“ ’Twere best not, Margaret,” said I. “ There’s no proof, it seems.”

“ No, so I find,” returned the old dame. “ More’s the pity.”

“ And where is he now ?”

“ Started for France, to carry the clatter, the fiend ! He’s like the genius of mischief and rapine, an evil and malignant demon.”

“ What could be his motive, Martha ?”

“ Ill will to you, I’ll be sworn. He heard, I’m told, that you were greatly beloved and well thought of in the regiment you were in, and he wished to spite you in your tenderest part. He

knew you loved the old mansion with a devoted affection."

Badly as I thought of my enemy, I could hardly conceive him so malignant as the faithful old servant made him out. It was useless to dwell upon the subject, and I willingly turned my inquiries upon a more interesting subject, the owners of Marston Hall. Although I had kept up a correspondence with Mistress Sweetapple occasionally since I had left my father's roof, still I had much to learn, I found.

"Miss Villeroy," said I, "Martha, have you any news to give me of her or her relatives?"

"None that will much please you," she replied. "That party has been on the continent, almost ever since you left London. They have now returned to this neighbourhood; and report says, that your old antagonist, Lord Hardenbrass, is speedily to marry Miss Villeroy, if they be not already married."

Notwithstanding all the efforts I had made to school myself, and try to forget that lovely creature, a pang, sharp as the stiletto of the Portuguese, shot through my heart at the words.

"The fiery trigon hath recovered completely from his wounds," said I, "has he? Well,

happiness be theirs ! And the Lady Constance, what of her ? Is she married, too, Martha ?”

“ No,” returned the old dame, “ I can answer for it, she is not. Her whole care and attention has been given to her father, the Duke, who has never recovered the dreadful wound he received in London, in that duel with the Lord Cœur de Lion. I understand he is in a miserable state of health, even now ; and never very likely to be much better.”

I felt shocked to hear this ; and reproached myself with the taunt I had thrown out against Lady de Clifford.

“ Excellent creature !” said I ; “ how much I honour that paragon of women. For fineness of disposition, nobleness of mind, worth, high honour, and beauty, Martha, that lady towers upon a monument, high as the clouds, above her fellow-creatures.”

“ She certainly is an excellent lady,” returned Martha ; “ with the brow of a queen, and the gentleness of a child. I saw her but a week ago.”

“ Saw her ! Who, Martha ?”

“ Lady Constance de Clifford. She has been here more than once since they returned.”

"Here? Lady Constance here? what, in this cottage?" said I, surprized.

"Yes," returned Martha; "and sitting in that chair you now sit on."

"For what did she come hither, Margaret," said I.

"Ostensibly to inquire after *me*—in sober sadness, to inquire about *you*. I was ill, and confined to my bed; Mistress Jampote, the housekeeper at Marston Hall, who knows me, heard of it, and told the Lady Constance. A few days afterwards I was visited on my sick couch by the doctor, from Abbots Wickford, and the next day the Lady Constance, in her riding-habit, was standing beside my couch when I awoke, after a refreshing sleep, the effects of the doctor's drugs."

"Beautiful creature!"

"Since that," continued Martha; "she rode over twice a-week, to inquire after me; and you may be pretty sure we spoke of you often. Nay, it's all very well, but you won't easily persuade me that a young and lovely creature like that would come twice a-week, so many miles, merely to inquire after an old bed-ridden house-

keeper, without there was some interesting news she wished to learn from her."

"How long did you say it was since she last was here?" I inquired.

"A month," said Martha. "She never came after that unlucky accident she heard of."

"What accident? in heaven's name."

"Why, the Marchioness of Richborough's being drowned in the lake, at Plumpton."

"The devil!" said I. "How came she to hear the particulars of that affair, Margaret?"

"Naturally enough," she replied. "The Marquis is her relation; she couldn't help but hear all about it; most likely from himself."

"Martha," said I, rising, "I find the room rather warm. For the present, I shall leave you, and take my horse to the village, where I intend to sleep. To-morrow early I shall visit you again before I leave, as I have much to say to you. For the present, then, farewell."

"Farewell, my dear child," she said. "Child, indeed! what a man you have become; six

feet one, if you're an inch. And how dark and curly your hair is grown; and how handsome you are! Well, I always said you were the picture of Sir Herbert, and now you are liker than ever. Ah, my dear young master, I fear me your father is playing a hard-hearted game by you. I have every reason to believe he has totally disinherited my poor boy, now this stranger has come into the world."

"I should not care, Martha," said I, "though he cut me off with a shilling, so he did not utterly cast me off from his affections."

"Alas! alas! 'evil communications corrupt good manners,' as the copy-book says; and those he is now led by and connected with, totally pervert his mind. I suppose you have heard that all the pictures, plate, and valuables have been packed up and sent off to furbish up this Château Rousillon he has taken?"

"I neither know or care, Martha," said I. "It is enough that my father thinks me unworthy to share his affections or his councils;—that, without fault on my part, he has almost spurned me from his hearth, and degraded me

as far as he could in the eyes of the world. That I have faults, I acknowledge—that I am head strong, rash, fiery in temper, and inconsiderate, with a thousand faults besides, I am ready to acknowledge; but that I am, as he would have the world believe, vicious, evil in disposition, profligate, and altogether a fool, that I deny. Farewell, Martha,” said I. “‘Evil or good report,’ as the poet says, ‘we soon live down, if undeserved.’ Unfortunately my career as yet has been so singularly unlucky, that I have not been able to give the lie to my maligners and various enemies; and those I have fallen in with in the world, have but too frequently shewn themselves in disgusting colours. The seed of good offices, which I have sown, has perpetually produced the harvest of ingratitude. It was truly unfortunate, indeed, I could not remain in, the—th for there I found myself in a situation which might have led on to fortune. Well, be it so, good Martha; adieu, for the present. To-morrow, I shall visit and take leave of you before I start.”

It was not my intent to ride straight to the village, although I told old Martha so, in order

that I might spend some time in wandering about the neighbourhood I loved so well. I therefore bent my steps to the now devastated Grange; and dismounting, gave my horse to a man I found amongst the labourers and firemen, with directions to take him to the village, and order me supper and a bed at the little inn. "For the last time, perhaps, in my life I will spend a few hours," thought I, "amongst the scenes of my youth. And if, as Martha says, I am disinherited by my sire, I will never again return hither."

Shunning the bustle and hubbub going on around the smouldering building, I struck into the chace, and bent my steps towards the old churchyard of Belfield, a favourite spot, with its lovely glimpses of forest scenery, its romantic dell, and its old walls, grey with the wind and rain of centuries. "In such a spot," says some one or other, "Death is never unlovely, but meets us with the Gospel upon his lips, and the garland of hope upon his forehead." I meditated amongst the moss-clad tombstones, till the shadows of evening warned me to depart. The mournful yew-branches were silvered

in the moonlight as I arose to leave the churchyard. It is difficult, at such moments, and in such a scene, to tear oneself away. The step lingers beside the old grey tower, which seems to stand a monument of the Crusading knights of former days. "Can it be possible," methought, "that Old Martha has heard aright? Can it, indeed, be true, that my father intends to sell the estate upon which his sires have dwelt since the Conquest?" The thought was agonizing; and I turned, and slowly took my way towards the Grange. I wandered there amongst its gardens and shrubberies for some hours. The state in which I found them, showed how much the place had of late been neglected. The unpruned trees and shrubs encroached completely upon the once well kept gravel walks, and the long dank grass grew in luxuriance in every part of the pleasance. I visited the stream at the end of the garden, with its overhanging trees, where in boyhood I had first learned to angle, and listened to the night-bird shrieking in the woods beyond. Then, turning towards the building, I contemplated its blackened walls, a volume of smoke rising from the midst, and the moon showing the ghastly and

skeleton-like rafters, through the ample windows and falling towers.

Whilst I gazed upon the rent and umbered buildings, as though they had but awaited my coming that I might witness their downfall, some of the timbers gave way with a horrid crash, the walls seemed to slide inwards into the midst, coming down with a noise like the growl of distant thunder, a huge volume of smoke arose into the clear night-air. That was the last time I ever saw the Moated Grange.

CHAPTER XIII.

I should have wearied of this fellow's company, had I not been still more tired of my own thoughts.

His breath is as dangerous as the breath of a demiculverin.

SCOTT.

A DAY or two from this period, found me in the great metropolis, lounging in the great street of that town of towns, and making my way to the great artist in military habiliments. Mr. Jones, of Regent Street, in order to consult with him upon the necessary equipments for my new regiment, the 145th. Upon introducing myself, and making my wants known, he quickly took upon himself the ordering of my habiliments.

"There is a gentleman at the other end of the shop, Sir," said he, "belonging to the

145th, Lieutenant Bullyman, just at this moment trying on a regimental coat."

On turning, I instantly recognized the youth who had been my fellow-passenger to Cork, and who had professed himself an advocate for the custom of fighting a duel upon first joining a corps, as a necessary *débat*. I therefore made no scruple of stepping up and accosting him, as I wished to learn something of the regiment, and the part of the world I was bound for. He remembered me instantly, and soon enlightened me upon the subject, as far as was able.

"Fort George," said he. "Oh, it's a d——d hole of a place. Every day there, Sir, is a month. Added to which, there are so many detachments still-hunting, that it's a case of solitary confinement altogether. There are some temporary barracks up in the mountains; and one never sees the *depôt* for months at a time. For my part, I shall try and get out to the service companies; for it's the devil to be snowed up in a Highland castle for six months at a time, where you can hardly get food to eat, and are as miserable, as if an exile in Siberia."

I felt pleased at the thought of so romantic a situation, and determined to volunteer for one of those Siberian detachments the moment I got there. As Lieutenant Bullyman, who had been on leave for two months, was like myself on the eve of starting for Fort George, we agreed to go together, and commenced an intimacy forthwith. We dined, therefore, together that day; went to Covent Garden Theatre that night, and the next night, after ordering our regimentals to be forwarded without delay, started, per mail, for the north.

Scotland had always been fairy-land to me. The perusal of Guy Mannering would of itself have made me anxious to visit it; and the scenes described in Rob Roy had rendered the Highlands so peculiarly interesting, that I looked upon each pine forest, rocky glen, river and heath, with the devotion of a Highlander. I was going there, too, under tolerably pleasing circumstances; not as an idle tourist to visit Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, but as a soldier on duty. And doubtless, I thought, I shall meet with as many adventures when on the mountains, hunting after the whisky brewers—

those hardy Highlanders—as Francis Osbaldiston did at the clachan of Aberfoil.

“Pah!” said my companion, “what a mistake! You’ll find the highlands a bore, Fort George, a Bastille, the country altogether overrated, and the inhabitants a race of Esquimaux. Why, Sir, if you ask a lady to dance at a ball she’ll answer you in an unknown tongue. ‘Fats yer wull,’ was all I could get out of the mouth of the last lady with whom I danced at Inverness—the day after we marched to Fort George. There was Buttenshaw, Pattypan, L’Estrange, and O’Grady, all five of us got the same answer from our partners that night. ‘Fats yer wull, and dinna ken,’ was all we could elicit. For a taste,” continued my companion.—‘Which, Madam,’ said I, by way of commencing an interesting conversation; ‘which do you think looks best on parade, the bear skin or the chaco?’

“‘Fats yer wull,’ said the lady.

“‘I beg pardon,’ said I; ‘but will you favour me by translating that pretty *patois*. I don’t understand ‘Fats yer wool?’ Is it Gaelic or high-Dutch?’

“‘I dinna ken,’ returned the damsel.

“And there the conversation dropped for five minutes. However, as the lass was really extremely handsome, I determined to draw her out, if possible.

“‘Pray, Madam,’ said I, ‘what is your private opinion on the subject of wings and epaulettes? The wings, as you see, are the ornamentals upon the shoulders of the light bobs and grannies. The epaulettes are the decorations pertaining to the battalion officers. The gentleman next you wears a wing. This extremely handsome swab upon my shoulder is an epaulette; which do you consider the most becoming of the two?’

“‘Fats yer wull,’ returned the lass, with the prettiest expression in the world.

“‘Which, I’m asking, Madam, do you altogether prefer?’

“‘I dinna ken,’ she said, with a malicious glance at her friend opposite, and there the conversation dropped. There, Sir, think of that for an intellectual treat.”

“I have always heard,” I said, “that the better classes in Scotland are no whit behind their English neighbours in conversational powers. De Mowbray of the hussars, who is

a Highlander, has given me several letters of introduction to the different families around; but if I'm to be saluted with tones so unmusical to English ears, as 'Fats yer wull,' and 'Dinna ken,' I think I shall put them in the fire. Where was this assembly held at which you met those fair nymphs with the discordant voices?"

"It was not at an assembly, man, at all," said Lieutenant Bullyman, "it was at a Highland meeting."

"A Highland meeting! Oh! that accounts for it. What, a sort of gathering, when only the peasantry meet together."

"It's all we have seen of Scotch society as yet, however," returned Bullyman; "for, unluckily, not one of our officers have any acquaintance in the North."

"Well, I shall look up my introductions," I said, "and deliver them faithfully. My friend, Mowbray, speaks rapturously of the style of life amongst the gentry in the North, and the assemblies, he says, are delightful."

"Well, well," said Bullyman, "we shall see what your introductions do for us."

In this sort of conversation we passed the borders, wound our way amongst the "Cheviot mountains lone," and reached Edinburgh, where we halted for a night's rest, and crossed the Frith of Forth the next morning.

It was four o'clock, pitch dark, cold and dismal, as we crossed the Forth; so that we saw little of Sir Walter's "own romantic town."

"There," said Bullyman, when we landed, "we're in the kingdom of Fife; and a precious fine, barren-looking, inhospitable spot it is. I dare swear now, you would be for looking after Macduff's castle, where his wife, his bairns, and all the innocent souls that traced his line, were put to the sword."

"I would we had time enough," said I, "and I certainly should do so. This is Fifeshire, is it? How many romantic and delightful associations does it call to mind."

"You'd much better call to mind your baggage in the boat; for I see at least a score of those brawny Scotch porters have taken a grip of some one or two of the packages. There's one fellow, with the brawn of Hercules, has loaded himself with a hat-box of mine, contain-

ing a six-and-ninepenny gossamer, and is making as much of getting it ashore, as if it were a seaman's chest."

We now traversed over the kingdom of Fife, and crossing the Firth of Tay, reached Aberdeen that night. From thence we took the night-coach, and arriving next morning at the little hamlet of Campbeltown, bent our steps across the heath to Fort George.

Fort George is a dark, sombre-looking pile. On one side the wild waters dash, and on the other a blasted heath, barren enough to be identified with the very place where Macbeth encountered the witches, meets the eye. As my companion had described it, a more dull and melancholy looking place for troops to be quartered in was not, I should think, to be met with in Great Britain.

It was a perfect town withinside the walls; but it seemed an uninhabited town, for not a soul was to be seen, except the sentinels within the gates.

Just as we entered, however, the bugle sounded the assembly, and the dépôt of the 145th were beginning to turn out for parade. We stopped, therefore, in the dull, dark-looking

square to observe them. Altogether the appearance of the place reminded me of the description in "Ivanhoe," of the Preceptory of Templestow. The morning was cold and comfortless, a driving sleet blew in our faces, and the buildings had a melancholy and half habitable look; whilst ever and anon the armed heel of some field officer, or depôt adjutant, clanked upon the pavement, as he passed from one door to another of the officers' quarters. Presently the brass drum, rattling and reverberating, was re-echoed from the walls around, whilst the trumpets, fifes, cymbals, and bagpipes flourished out their inspiring notes. The companies wheeled into column, and the depôt marched past in review order.

These are sounds which sanctify the most unpleasing quarters. Accordingly all the military ardour and enthusiasm which he who loves the trade of war, is wont to feel when viewing its "pride and circumstance," filled my breast, and I felt that life passed, under any other circumstances, must be flat, stale, and valueless.

My companion now offered his services as guide, and ushering me into the mess-room, introduced me to several officers who were there

assembled. It happened that at this time there was a pretty large muster of officers, from various other regiments and depôts quartered in Scotland, on occasion of a general court martial having the day before assembled, and as there were also the depôts of two other regiments at that time in the fort, there was a good sized party in the room.

After the parade was over I was also formally introduced to my brother officers of the 145th, and reported myself arrived safe and sound to the then commanding officer of the depôt, Major Clavering. I was received by them with great kindness, and the circumstance of my having exchanged from the hussars, was rather a favourable feature in my case; the officers serving in a regiment stationed in the West Indies, being generally men whose poverty, more than will, consents to such unhealthy service.

I thought, however, I observed a sort of coolness towards my friend Bullyman, which I could not completely comprehend, and which I set down to his style being rather too rhodomontade and overbearing. He was evidently a boaster and a disputacious personage,

loud and dictatorial in conversation, very much inclined to dispute upon every topic which arose in conversation, and sometimes so rude and abrupt in manner as to make a disagreeable stop in the harmony of the assembled party.

He rather hung to my skirts I observed, and wished to have it supposed, by his manner, that we had been friends of old. Making himself, therefore, as agreeable as his nature permitted, he introduced me into my barrack-room, and performed for me all those little attentions most grateful to a stranger and a new-comer.

There was to be a party at the mess that day, I found. Several civilians had been invited, residents in the good town of Inverness, and as he offered me the use of his room and his servant, whilst my quarters were getting in order, we were soon cozily seated beside his fire, I smoking a friendly cigar and holding converse as we looked from his window, upon the wild waters dashing upon the iron-bound Scottish coast.

"A pleasant view that," he observed, seeing my eyes wander over the main of waters.

"Delightful," said I.

"How d'ye mean by that," said he, "*delightful*, I think it *damnable*, disgusting and disagreeable. Fancy being lodged in this sea-built tower, and condemned to watch the monotonous waters of this infernal coast for a whole year together; and that to a man of my kidney. One who *has seen* society, and mingled with the world, lived in the eye of fashion from infancy. Oh, it's monstrous! London, Sir, is my world; I am wretched in this situation. Think of this dreary inhospitable view, and the bustle and gaiety of Regent Street at this hour of the day."

"I rather prefer this," said I, "of the two. Perhaps I shall tire of it; but at present the view of the ocean from your window, now that the sun gilds the waves, 'those curly headed monsters,' is delightful. What made you join the army? for I fear you'll find it, with your ideas and tastes, rather a succession of banishments."

"I fancy I shall, from what I have already seen," said he. "I came to the place from Spike Island in Ireland."

"What place is that?" I inquired, laughing.

"Spare me the description," said he bitterly,

"I cannot liken it, I never saw the like. 'Tis the curse of service, Sir. We are sent to waste life in places, which (but for this red rag we're decked out in, and this trinket we wear by our sides, and which somehow reconcile the children of vanity to all the hardships the trade is heir to) it would break the spirit of a hermit to be obliged to exist in."

"My dear Sir," said I, "you have mistaken your profession. Why do you follow the trade of arms, or why have you not rather chosen some profession in which you might have passed your time amidst the bustle of life in London?"

"What! be an inspector of filth, a doctor, or wear out my youth chained to the desk of a merchant's counting-house; or defeat my favour with a wig and gown, and become some Temple-haunting briefless barrister; some *nisi prius* scarecrow? No! that would never do for my complaint."

"Well, what then would you like?" said I.

"Ten thousand a year and a park. That's what I like. Curse the service; I detest and abominate it."

"Then why not sell out, and retire to your

park, and the ease and enjoyment of the ten thousand superfluities, and luxuries purchasable by your ten thousand a-year?"

"My dear Sir," he returned with a sigh, "I'm a younger son. I haven't ten thousand shillings a-year, besides my pay; or think ye I'd be here?"

"Then," said I, "it strikes me, since you seem to have no choice in the matter, having made your election, and joined the service, the best way would be to make yourself as happy as you can."

"I suppose so," said the Lieutenant drily. "However, I confess to you, that I might have been more content if I had joined any other corps but this. I don't like the gallant 145th, they're a queer set of fellows."

"They appear to me a very gentlemanly set of fellows," I replied.

"No doubt, on a two hours' acquaintance-ship, you think so," he rejoined. "So did I till I found them out. For instance, there's Roland Robert Fetlock; that is a colt, indeed, for he can talk of nothing but his horse. He's one of the bores of the mess-table, and he goes by the name of the groom. I gave him

that name, and if he had not been a coward, as well as a base groom, he'd have called me out for it. You'll be bored to death with the merits of that Squire Richard's stud, if you give him your company, I promise you. Fancy a man of eight thousand a-year, and whose passion is horses, serving in a regiment in the West Indies,—*ergo*, he's fool, as well as jockey.

“Then there's Captain Euclid, a narrow-minded pedant, very fit to display his deep reading, and wrangle away his life at Oxford or Cambridge, amongst other black-letter double asses, as disputative as himself, but no more calculated for the society of army men, than I am for those of the cloister. He'll interrupt Fetlock's description of how his horse performed in a hurdle race, to lecture upon the superior style in which Bucephalus carried Alexander, or to assert the superiority of the Spartan horsemanship over that of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

“Then comes that water-fly, Bellarmine; the most insensate ass that ever was enfolded in regimentals: a selfish, miserable, empty coxcomb; a regular libel upon manhood.”

“My dear Sir,” said I, “I must not sit to

hear this ; come, it is time that we prepared for the mess."

"Nay, hear me dilate upon the virtues of our commandant," he said ; "let me put you in possession of his capabilities as a soldier, and I will spare you the remainder."

"Not a sentence," I said ; "I should hold myself a sort of receiver of scandal, if I heard more."

"Well, *n'importe*," said he, "you'll find what I have uttered is the truth, at any rate."

Soon after this conversation, the drums sounding out the "roast beef of old England," we joined the mess-table, where altogether a large party were assembled. Here again I thought I observed, that amongst the officers of his own corps, my friend Lieutenant Bullyman seemed to be by no means a favourite. He was not exactly cut, but there was a reserve on their part towards him and a sort of endurance of his conversation, when addressed to any of the 145th, which shewed me he had in some way made himself on ill terms with the whole *depôt*. Accordingly, he retaliated upon them by a contemptuous and rather rude bearing, which ever and anon met with a sharp rebuff ; and the

personalities he indulged in, were met by those to whom he addressed them by reproofs, which for the time generally discomfited him, and sent him to another party. Meanwhile, the dinner being over, and the mirth growing fast and furious, bumper after bumper was swallowed, and the table was quickly in a roar.

"Squire Richard," cried Lieutenant Bullyman, "you're going the pace, I see; come, I'll take you a bet you don't gallop up a hill perpendicular, and with a pistol, shoot a sparrow flying."

"I never boasted of my skill in the pistol," said Fetlock, "though I cannot say as much for others. You're a good shot, I think you told us so; can you hit Wat Tyler's mark?"

"Not he," said Bellarmine, "he doesn't relish a target that fires again. Best not spur the horse too sharply, Bullyman, he may fling up and send you into a ditch."

"Better be struck by the hoofs of the horse, than the heels of the ass," said Bullyman. "I didn't address myself to you."

"If you allude to the ass in the lion's skin, I grant you," returned the dandy.

"No more of that," said the commanding officer; "a song; a song, Captain Plume is

going to favour us with the 'British Grenadiers.'"

It was easier to call for a song, than gain a hearing, where every man talked, and few listened. Amongst the loudest of the speakers was Captain Euclid, who had got upon his favourite theme, the ancients. Accordingly, my new friend soon proceeded to draw him out, as he called it, and involve himself in fresh difficulties.

"I maintain an opinion opposite to that," he said, in answer to some observation he had heard him utter: "I hold fast to the Macedonian Phalanx; a fig for your short-sworded soldiery of the seven-hilled city. I'm for long spears and solid squares, albeit, I've no objection to the wedge formation either."

"You're clean wrong then, Sir," said the Captain, taking the bait. "The Greeks and Macedonians were in error, with their sixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged in close array. Reflection, as well as the event, prove that the massive phalanx, strong as it was, was unable to contend against the activity of the Roman legion. The legion was only eight deep."

"Ten, Sir, ten, I've been told," said Bullyman.

"Eight, only eight; every school-boy kens that," returned Euclid; "and three feet between files, and three feet between ranks; consequently they had free space for the use of their arms and motions. Yes, Sir, it was the short-sword, and this formation, that conquered the world."

"Ha, ha!" said Bullyman; "with the musket and bayonet in the hands of the 145th, I wouldn't care a pin for their formation and weapons, even though you led 'em on,—not a a pin."

"A pin, said ye," returned the pedant, "peradventure, a pin may be a more important instrument than you imagine. A pin has a head, Sir, and that's more than some folks I know are possessed of; but as regards the phalanx—"

"No, no," shouted Bullyman, "the pin, the pin. Prove the importance of the pin, and I give up the phalanx to the devil who invented it."

"The pin," said the Captain, contemptuously, "my dear Sir, however, you may despise it, requires in its manufacture, the hands of at

least a dozen men ; quite, I should say, as intellectual, though, peradventure, not quite so conceited as your worthy self. ‘Cornet my dear.’”

“I’m not going to dispute it,” returned the Lieutenant, winking at me, as much as to say, now we shall have it. “Go on.”

“The pin,” continued the Captain, “in its manufacture, will instance the division of labour better than any article I can just now think of, and the fair Belinda at her toilette, perhaps, as she repaired her smiles, little thought when she selected the bright particular pin which confined her boddice, the number of hands that minikin had necessarily passed through in its formation. Ahem ! Yes, Sir. One man draws out the wire, another is employed to straighten it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the top for receiving the head. To make that head, Sir, requires, two or three distinct operations, to put it on is another man’s business, to whiten the pin is another’s, and it is even a trade of itself to put them into paper.”

The Captain’s description had so interested and amused the whole table, that it was with difficulty several near him could restrain them-

selves from bursting into laughter. However, he was so absorbed in his own conceit, that with his eyes raised, and his head thrown back he continued to dilate upon the subject, till he had completely given the history of the trade.

“Pin-making being thus divided into distinct operations, gentlemen,” continued he, “even a small manufactory, composed of but ten persons, can easily produce fifty thousand pins in a day, think of that; each person, therefore, Sir, can bring to perfection four thousand eight hundred pins daily. Think of that, gentlemen,—and remember also, if you please, that had they wrought independently, the best man among them could not have made twenty.—This most important young gentleman, here, although he evidently despises the instrument, could not even have manufactured one pin in a month, to save his soul.—ahem!”

“I thank my stars, therefore,” said Bullyman, “and I hold him base, common, and mechanical, who could so give up his time, as even to have learned by rote, the process of making a pin. Ha, ha! fancy, only fancy, gentleman, the circumstance of our learned and worthy friend, Captain Euclid; the erudite

and accomplished author of the *Life of Quintus Metellus Celer*, proconsul of the Gauls, condescending to inquire into the component parts of a minnikin pin. Ha, ha, ha ! bravo."

"Laugh at yourself, Bullyman, my dear," said the Captain, growing angry. "I'll assure you, you'll find the subject inexhaustible, ye're a puir weakly, shallow mortal, Cornet, with no more brains than are to be found in a mallet."

"Perhaps not, in the estimation of a narrow-minded pedant," returned Bullyman. "I don't allow you to be judge of a man's capacity, for anything but the manufacture of pins. Ha, ha ! God help thee, Euclid, for thou art a great fool."

The Highlander's answer to this, was in deed, not word. He leant across the table, and with his face glowing with rage, emptied his glass of claret into the countenance of Lieutenant Bullyman.

Except by those immediately near where we were seated, and who had been listening to the controversy and enjoying it, the party had not seen this transaction, and it effectually silenced all who had witnessed it.

The irate Scot, having thus vented his anger, arose from his seat, and deliberately taking his foraging cap from the peg on which he had hung it, walked out of the mess-room; whilst Lieutenant Bullyman was so taken by surprize at the consummation he had provoked, that he appeared completely dumbfounded. He hadn't even energy to wipe from his beard the libation Captain Euclid had conferred upon it; but sat with stupid dismay eyeing his opponent till he left the room.

Meanwhile, the transaction was presently whispered from one to other, till the whole table became cognisant of the matter: all eyes were then turned upon the discomfited Bullyman; and the mirth being marred, the somewhat uproarious laughter and conversation quickly subsided into silence.

"Had you not better retire?" said I, to Lieutenant Bullyman, who, was sitting leaning back in his chair, his chin upon his chest, and his eyes fixed upon the mahogany before him.

"Do you advise it?" inquired he.

"I hardly know how to advise in such a case," said I, "but I think you had better do so."

"Will you come with me," said he.

"I'll follow you in a few minutes," replied I, "if you wish me to be your friend."

"For God's sake, do so," said he, rising and retiring; "come quickly."

The senior officer of the 145th, Major Clavering, who had been engaged in conversation with the friend next him, had not seen, or been made acquainted with this little fracas. He, therefore, rallied the guests, pushed the bottle about, and the conversation once more becoming general, I arose, left the room, and sought Bullyman's quarters.

I found that gentleman in bed, to my no slight astonishment, and upon my inquiring as to the meaning of such an early retirement, he informed me that he had sent for the surgeon of the regiment, as he meant to put himself in the sick report.

"Report yourself sick!" said I, in astonishment, "and at such a time as this. Then, what do you mean to do about Captain Euclid?"

"What do you advise?" said he.

"You surely don't want advice," I replied.

"You cannot help yourself. You must call him out instantly. Did you not ask me to be your friend?"

"I've thought better of it," said he, turning and rolling himself in the coverlid; "I shall do no such thing. I shall report him to the commanding officer for ungentlemanly conduct at the mess-table."

"And this is your firm determination?" said I.

"It is," returned he.

"Then, I wish you good night, Lieutenant Bullyman, and pleasant dreams," returned I. "Here comes the Doctor."

Leaving my new friend, I sought my barrack-room, and tired with my journey, retired to bed.

It was evident to me now, why my friend the Lieutenant was on ill terms with his brother officers. He was evidently a bully and a coward; had got himself into several scrapes before this untoward event, and failing in doing the thing that was right, was slightly regarded accordingly. This last affair, however, was a more serious scrape than he had yet

thrust himself into, and strange to say, he had not courage sufficient to meet the man whose insult he had provoked.

Meanwhile, the Colonel was made acquainted with the circumstance, by the person who ought to have been most careful in concealing it, himself. The Captain, therefore, finding that my new friend failed in calling him out, (being impatient of action) proceeded to call the Lieutenant out for the insult he had given him, before he himself baptized him with the claret. The Lieutenant refusing to come when called upon, the whole affair became a matter of inquiry, and created quite a sensation in the corps.

Major Clavering, our commandant, was a gallant and chivalrous soldier, and one who had sought the bubble reputation, more than once "in the imminent deadly breach;" a sort of fellow who would volunteer for a storming party as readily and carelessly as he would for a steeple-chase; but he was quite unequal to the command, even of the *dépôt* of a regiment. He couldn't move an inch without his adjutant. His ambition was to have a

fashionable regiment, and he especially liked those quarters in time of peace, where he could patronize the ball, the play, and the mess dinner-party. He was, indeed, a gay and gallant fellow, as jealous of the smallest deviation in dress among his officers on parade or in the assembly room, as he would have been of their address in the field. The circumstance, therefore, of one of his corps being known to have provoked and received an insult without resenting it, was gall and wormwood to him. Being of a kind disposition, he wished to avoid courts martial as much as possible; and after giving the Lieutenant one or two opportunities and hints to settle matters with Captain Euclid, by the arbitration of the pistol, he signified to him, that it would be advisable to exchange into another regiment, or altogether sell out of the 145th.

The Lieutenant accepted the former alternative, and promised to negotiate an exchange as soon as possible. Meanwhile he was completely cut by the corps, and during the time he waited for an answer to the application for leave of absence, being relieved from duty, stalked about

like a miserable degraded outcast, who had committed some crime which placed him without the pale of society.

Under these circumstances, much as I despised and condemned him, so utterly unhappy did he seem, that I could not choose but pity him. Whether or not he discovered this by my countenance, as I occasionally passed him, I know not; but he made several efforts to accost me. His meanness of spirit even prompting him to bow, although I omitted to return the compliment, he at length forced a visit upon me one morning, as I was at breakfast in my barrack-room. Naturally surprized, I arose, and was about to request him to withdraw, but he threw himself upon my good feeling, and begged a hearing, in terms so abject, that my pity for his situation got the better of my contempt for his pusillanimous conduct, and as he asked my advice, I felt myself quite unable to refuse him the audience.

It happened unfortunately that Major Clavering at that moment paid me a visit in my quarters, to consult with me about some private theatricals he had it in contemplation to set

agoing in the fort. He stopped short on observing Bullyman seated at my table, instantly turned upon his heel, and quitted the room.

I saw that the incident would be likely to lead me into difficulties; and the event proved that I was not far out in my conjecture. Accordingly, after the morning parade, I found the visit of Lieutenant Bullyman had been canvassed amongst the officers of the 145th, and, as the cant term goes, they rather tipped me the cold shoulder. In addition to this, the Major spoke to me upon the subject in a tone and manner I thought highly offensive and uncalled for. I answered him with considerable warmth, and was put under arrest for my pains. In an evil hour, I resolved to rebel against opinion and authority, and conceiving myself cut without rhyme or reason, disdaining all explanation, invited Bullyman to spend the evening in my quarters. That invitation sealed my fate.

Bullyman was a designing knave, as well as a coward. He managed to get me to espouse his quarrel, and feel a deeper resentment against my brother officers. During the time I was under arrest, his leave of absence arriving, he

quitted the regiment for good, leaving me in reversion the quarrel he had been too great a coward to fight out.

In short, I was released from arrest one morning, and, after a reprimand from the Major, ordered to join my company.

After the drill was over, as I still retained a haughty and contemptuous feeling towards some of my brother officers, I joined a party, consisting of two or three officers belonging to another of the corps stationed in the fort, in a walk to the town of Inverness. After spending the day in wandering over the field of Culloden, we returned, dined at Inverness, and afterwards strolled home.

CHAPTER XIV.

What! shall we have incision? Shall we imbrue?
Then death rock me asleep, abridge my doleful days!
Why then, let grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds
Untwine the sisters three! Come, Atrophos, I say.

SHAKSPERE.

ON entering the mess-room, I found some half dozen of my brother officers, who had remained after mess, seated before the fire, in the enjoyment of a glass of whiskey toddy and a cigar. They looked round when I entered, but did not speak to me, and continued their conversation amongst themselves. I took a turn or two up and down the room, and at length, stopping in rear of the circle, I looked hard at them individually.

"A cold night, gentlemen," said I.

"Very," returned the Major, drily, who was one of the party.

I took another turn. My blood boiled in my veins, and I felt myself about to lose all control over my actions. If any man would but have spit in my face, methought I could have been happy. However, as no one either insulted or made room for me in the circle, I continued my quarter-deck promenade.

Presently the adjutant, entering the room, requested a word with the commandant. He arose to accompany him, and unbuckling his sword, threw it on his chair.

"I shall be back, Plume," said he, "in two minutes. Let nobody take my seat."

I stepped up to the fire, took the sword from the chair, and was about to seat myself.

"Stay, Sir," said Plume, "that is Major Clevering's seat. He is returning. See, he has left his sword."

"I'm quite aware of it," said I, seating myself. "I heard himself say so. A cold night this, gentlemen, as I before observed. Let me stir the fire for you."

In saying this, I thrust the Major's steel scabbard and blade between the bars of the grate,

stirred up the fire, and left the instrument sticking amidst the glowing coals.

The circle sat in a state of perfect amazement. They looked from one to the other, then at the sword, then at me, as I sat, with arms folded, watching the glowing falchion as it became red-hot, and then at each other again. Every man there knew the Major well, his high and chivalrous spirit, and his impatience at any thing like insubordination. More than one feared him, and all toadied him to the top of his bent.

During at least a quarter of an hour that he was absent, no one uttered a sentence. Not a man sipped his grog, but all pulled with double vigour at their cigars—puff, puff, puff, puff. At length, a footstep approached, and the door opened; every head turned like lightning towards it. It was the mess waiter, to clear away some of the things. Again their eyes turned upon the Major's red-hot brand, with looks of curiosity and amaze—

And now sits expectation in the air.

The Major's armed heel and well known step at length were really heard in the passage, and the

next moment he was in the room. He advanced towards his seat before the fire. 'Twas filled. He stopped, and was about to demand his chair, when his eye fell upon his trusty falchion turned into a poker, and left between the bars of the grate. Not the Highland Thane, when he beheld the table full, and the blood-boltered Banquo on his stool could have so glared, as glared Major Hotspur Clavering upon his sometime weapon. There was no occasion for him to ask, "which of you have done this." The thing spoke for itself. He touched me sharply on the shoulder; his face was livid with rage, as I started up and confronted him. Pointing to the door as a signal for me to follow him, he turned upon his heel, and swiftly left the room. Traversing the passage, he glanced over his shoulder to see that I was behind, and passed out into the barrack square. He walked so rapidly, that I was compelled to mend my pace in order to keep him in sight. When about the middle of the square had been gained, he turned round and accosted me.

"Can you wield the weapon, you have put to so unworthy a use?" said he.

"I can," answered I.

"Be cautious, young man," said he, "I warn you that I am an expert swordsman. Unless you are yourself a good fencer, decline the weapon."

"Have no compunction, Major Clavering," said I, "the chances are, you'll find your match."

"I am glad to hear it," returned he, "'tis something out of the common custom. But the insult you have put upon me, is also singularly offensive. This is no common case—one of us must fall. The hour that saw the affront must not expire before it is wiped out. Get your weapon, and friend instantly. Pass the fort, and await me. If first, beside the cairn upon the heath. Do you agree to this?"

"I do," said I.

"In a quarter of an hour I shall expect you," continued he, as he turned and sought his quarters.

Amongst the officers of the dépôt of the —th Highlanders, I had several friends. One of them, with whom I was most intimate, had advised me that very morning to pick a quarrel amongst the officers of the 145th, as a means of righting myself with them. He could not very well, therefore, refuse to accompany me, and him I sought.

Tired with the day's excursion, he had retired to bed ; but rose immediately upon my making known my errand. He rather demurred to the settlement of the affair with our regimental swords ; but, at length, agreeing in consideration of the oddity of my affront to the Major, we took our way to the trysting place, as soon as he was fully equipped.

The moon shone out brightly, and the snow was upon the ground, when we left the gates of Fort George. I had had but small time for reflection ; yet, as I passed the walls of the fortress, I felt that the crisis of my fate had arrived. For the first time it struck me, that at best I was about to fight a losing battle. So strange is it, that the violence of one's feeling under insult or irritation, allow no pause till the entertainer has stepped so far that return is impossible. Five minutes back, I felt that if I could be foot to foot with my rapier point opposed to the breast of any one of my brother officers whose supercilious conduct had injured my honour, I should be happy. I had sought, and found my quarrel—fixed it upon one worthy my arm and weapon, and now, for the first time, "consideration came;"

though too late to "whip the offending Adam out of me." "Beware," says Polonius, "of entrance to a quarrel; but being in, bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee." I was fairly embarked in one; would that I had been wary of engaging in it! The latter part of the advice was now all I had to follow.

When on the open heath, the night was so clear—one of those bright lovely nights so common in the north during winter—that the country road was distinguishable almost as plain as on a sunny day.

"I wish you had fixed this business upon any one but Major Clavering," said my companion, "for then we might have had a chance of coming out of it without anything very serious. Now, however, you have placed us all on a quick-sand. Major Clavering is a wicked fellow, when he's regularly angry. You'll find no boys' play with him. Why didn't you take an opportunity of something sulky amongst the subs.

"I know not," said I; "he almost asked for the quarrel I thought, and so I indulged him. How mean you by the word wicked, as applied to Major Clavering of the—th?"

"Why not exactly in the sense the chaplain of the regiment would understand it," returned my friend. "I mean, that after the particular way in which you have sought him, he'll be likely to want letting blood to some extent, before he cools down. What you have put in his pipe will want a deal of smoking, that's all. But see, there's the cairn, and as I live he's there before us."

It was even so; the cairn was now not two hundred yards from us; and a figure was flitting backwards and forwards as restlessly and wildly as Elshender, the recluse, when first seen by Hobbie Elliot, on Micklestone Moor.

The Major was alone. He had sought and found the friend he meant to employ, desired him to follow, grabbed his case of pistols, and, glowing with fervour, longing for action, anxious to wash out the stain his honour had received, had hurried to the trysting-place, where the effervescence of his passion kept him at boiling heat till he found his antagonist set before his rapier's point.

It is singular, but not the less true, that

there are a sort of men who are thus insane upon this one point—the duello. Kind and warm-hearted fellows, good soldiers, and “tall fellows,” as Falstaff has it, most estimable men, jolly companions, and even by no means easy of affront, or seeking for the quarrel, and yet withal so ready to embark in any cause which is likely to bring on the duello; and so utterly unmanageable and opposed to any sort of arrangement short of “bullets wrapt in fire,” that even the most trifling and fancied offence, when once taken, must be wiped out by the ceremonious cartel. Irishmen and Frenchmen, the best hearted fellows in the world, are more apt to fancy themselves called upon to go out, than perhaps the natives of any other country.

Major Clavering was one of these most punctilious gentlemen; and certainly, at the present moment, he had cause to demand most ample satisfaction for the affront I had put upon him. He stopped in his hurried walk as soon as we reached the cairn, and lifted his foraging-cap to me as our eyes met. The angry spot was upon his brow, and I felt, with Richard,

that "for one or both of us the time was come." There was—there could be—no possible way of accommodating matters, after having seriously offended such as Clavering.

"My friend will be here immediately," said he. "See, he approaches. I have my pistols here, in case our swords are insufficient. I need not inquire if yours is the regulation blade, since I allow none other in the dépôt."

"Major Clavering," said I, "since you have thought proper to open a conversation before we engage in mortal conflict, perhaps you will allow me to say you have not, as commanding officer of the 145th, exactly used me with the consideration and kindness you were bound to do. I have chosen to fix this quarrel upon you, because I have observed that you have, in something, biassed the opinions of the officers of the dépôt; not only sanctioning their coolness towards me, on account of my advocating the cause of Lieutenant Bullyman, but actually, I am informed, advising my being cut in the corps."

"I would you had sought an explanation before, young man," said he; "and this might have been avoided. We all of us hoped for a

reconciliation ; but your great spirit, and indomitable pride, prompted you to treat every one of your brother officers with so much arrogance and hauteur, that it was impossible for any one to make advance towards a reconciliation after the offending object had removed himself from amongst us. No, Sir ; you have no cause of complaint. You chose between the society of your brother officers, and one who had brought disgrace upon the regiment. You became the friend, adviser, and associate of a cowardly scoundrel, whose pleasure it was, since the day he first joined, to offer gratuitous insult to his companions in arms, and then sneak out of the responsibility, by sheltering himself under the regulations of the service. You witnessed his last effort, and how he evaded giving satisfaction to the man who challenged him, and you ought to have avoided his society as that of a person unfit to live amongst men of honour. This is, however, now useless recrimination. You have conferred a singularly offensive insult upon *me*. I know you sufficiently to be aware that you will be ready and willing to answer it. Enough ! here is Captain O'Toole. I have possessed him with our grounds of quarrel. Draw ! Sir."

He drew the weapon he had brought with him, as he finished speaking, and putting himself in attitude, our swords crossed. The first half-dozen passes were sufficient to show me, had I not before known it, that the regulation-sword of the infantry of the present day is the most useless weapon that ever was invented in any age. To fence with it, was impossible; and after some half-dozen clumsy thrusts and wide parries, the Major, already at boiling-heat, being foiled in his lunges, changed his play, and dashing upon me, rained such a shower of blows, that had I not been extremely cautious, and given ground, he must have some how or other cut me down. He fought like a red-hot Paddy at a wake, and swung his blade about as though it had been a shilalegh.

How long this might have lasted, before one or other of us got an ugly wound, I cannot tell; but our swordsmanship was stopped by an accident to one of the weapons. In returning one of the Major's downright blows, and being irritated at receiving a cut, which had lacerated my cheek, I gave my blow with such good will, that my sword broke in two, like a piece of

cast-iron, and, saving the hilt and some half a foot of the remaining blade, I stood weaponless, and at his mercy.

He was too chivalrous in spirit to take advantage, and immediately dropped his point ; and our seconds stepped up.

“ Lend me your weapon, Counterblast,” said I. “ Major, I thank you for your courtesy ; you had me something at advantage.”

“ I think the affair is finished, Captain O’Toole, is it not ?” said Lieutenant Counterblast to the Major’s second. “ I’m glad it is no worse.”

“ Finished !” returned O’Toole ; “ is it finished you’re maning ? Not exactly. By the powers ! I think it’s hardly commenced. My principal is anything but satisfied. He rather desires to finish the affair like a gentleman. Hand your friend the weapon he asks for, Sir. Major Clavering is quite ready.”

“ I do not quite relish this sort of thing, Captain O’Toole,” said Counterblast. “ We shall get into a scrape, I fear. I feel inclined to withdraw my principal. Enough, and more than enough, has been done. Major Clavering

has had the best of it in every way ; he ought to be satisfied. Can we not arrange it without proceeding further, think ye ?”

“ By the Lord, lad ! but you don’t seem to understand the code of honour,” said O’Toole. “ You talk of withdrawing and arranging in the same breath. Permit me to say, the Major and I had arranged to come here to fight. There has been quite enough shilly-shallying in the hundred and forty-fifth, lately, methinks. We don’t want to be altogether laughed out of the Fort. If you withdraw your friend, I hope you mean to take his place.”

“ I understand the laws of honour,” returned Counterblast, “ quite as well, and I think indeed something better than you do yourself, Captain O’Toole ; and I am of opinion that this duel has proceeded far enough. I shall, however, so far concede to yours and the Major’s wishes, as to permit of the affair’s proceeding. But I will have no more sword-work. Give them a shot a-piece, and there an end. We have the weapons ready.”

“ Agreed, agreed,” said the Captain, stepping up to his principal, to advertize him of this

change of weapons ; “ agreed, agreed : ‘ odds bullets and triggers,’ as the man says in the play, ‘ let the pistol decide the matter out of hand.’ I’m clearly of your opinion.”

To be brief, then, we were placed with the usual distance between us.

As I received my weapon, the remembrance of the dreadful scene I had witnessed, on the occasion of my former duel with Lord Hardenbrass, came so vividly before me, that I shuddered at the prospect of another such catastrophe, and resolved to receive the Major’s fire, and not to return it. Counterblast, however, advised me to take good aim, and fire quick. “ It’s your only chance,” said he ; “ he’s a dead shot. Be steady, or you’re lost.”

I turned my eye, as he retired, upon my antagonist, and saw by his look that the hint was not to be neglected. My intent was instantly changed, and all qualms of conscience silenced by the angry feeling which arose at the evident sanguinary intentions of both my opponent and his second. The next moment, Captain O’Toole gave the signal, and we fired.

A stunning blow upon the head, sent me

reeling three or four paces from where I stood. I recovered, and saved myself from falling; and as the smoke of my pistol blew from before my eyes, I beheld my opponent stretched at full length upon the heath. His ball had grazed my temple—mine, had pierced his heart!

CHAPTER XV.

There's nothing level in our cursed natures,
But direct villany. Therefore, be abhorred,
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men !
His *semblable*, yea, himself, Timon, disdains ;
Destruction fang mankind !

SHAKSPERE.

I WILL pass over the scene which followed, and my feelings upon this unhappy event. Suffice it, the next morning found myself, Counterblast, and O'Toole, prisoners in our separate barrack-rooms, under close arrest. I felt that I was irretrievably ruined, and feared my friend and second would share in my disgrace.

My anticipations were not unfounded, as far as I myself was concerned. The matter became subject of court-martial. The very members whom I had met as friends, and who were

assembled when I first joined at Fort George, were again ordered to reassemble for my trial. The evidence was conclusive, and clearly in my disfavour. I had thrust a duel upon my commanding-officer by the most unwarrantable insult, given before several of the officers of the corps. I was found guilty, and cashiered; the two seconds getting off with a severe reprimand. The sentence was a hard but a just one, and I was pitied by the whole corps. When too late, they saw the injury they had inflicted upon me; and interest was subsequently made, even at head-quarters to procure my re-instatement. It, however was in vain. I had no powerful friend there of my own to back my suit; and like Rob Roy, I looked east, west, north, and south, and found neither hold nor hope, neither beild nor shelter. I was a broken man! Where to go, or what to do, I knew not. About a hundred pounds remained in my purse, after I had paid and settled the few debts I had contracted whilst with the 145th; and the same night of the day I was released from arrest, found me a wanderer upon the heath, I neither knew nor cared in what direction so that every stride I took removed me further from the walls of Fort

George, where I had thus been, as I conceived, victimized and disgraced.

It was the depth of winter; the night winds pierced through my chest, like a stiletto; yet I heeded neither "winter nor rough weather." There was too hot a summer in my bosom for me to feel aught in the shape of bodily pain at that moment.

When I was about to leave my barrack-room, my servant, a rear-rank man of the company to which I belonged a good-natured, honest-hearted fellow, who had eat, drank, and slept at the sound of the drum for the last twenty years of his life, suspecting from my manners and look that I was about either to cut my throat or do some other rash act, after pottering about the room, and offering me a hundred different little attentions, suddenly stepped before me, and thus accosted me:—"Your honour's not a-going to leave us to-night?" he said.

"I am, Cochrane," I answered; "why do you ask?"

"There's no conveyance, that I know of, from Cumbletown," said he, "after eight o'clock to-night, Sir. Have you ordered anything to fetch you away?"

"I have not," I said.

"Then how do you mean to go, Sir?" he inquired.

"Walk, Cochrane," I replied.

"Where to, Sir," he said, "on such a night as this?"

"I know not, my man," I answered: "perchance into my grave."

"Be persuaded, Sir," he said; "I'll take your things early in the morning, before the Aberdeen coach passes. I know you want to get away quietly, and we can be off before light."

"My good fellow," I replied, "I'm off even now. I could not remain here another night for worlds. It would kill me. I wish to avoid seeing any one."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" exclaimed the poor fellow, "I'm very sorry;—we're all sorry to part with you, Sir. The men all have a liking for you, even though you've been so short a time with us."

"Farewell, my good fellow," I said.

"I've never had a hard or unkind word from you," continued the soldier. "I've served many

officers, ay, and nursed many on their death-beds in the West Indies; but I never was more sorry to part with a master than I am with you. You've been too kind to me, Sir. I'm sorry for your misfortune; and if I was out of the service, I'd follow and serve you for nothing."

"My good fellow," said I, "this pains me. You owe me no gratitude. I've treated you but as a master should treat a good and faithful servant; one who has anticipated my every wish. Adieu! Send my baggage to the Aberdeen coach to be forwarded, and here is for your pains."

"Let me shake you by the hand, master," said the poor fellow, weeping. "We shall never meet again. I was to go out with you in the first draught to the West Indies. Now I shall go without you."

The rules of the service are strict. No officer, in any circumstance, can well shake hands with a private in the same regiment; and I was about to draw back as the honest fellow held out his hand to press mine.

"Pshaw!" said I, "what have I to do with the service now? Am I not degraded, dis-

graced, and cashiered? There's my hand, my good fellow," said I. "Farewell; we shal meet no more."

I put ten guineas into his hard fist, as I wrung it. When he saw it was gold, he followed me to return it. But I refused to receive it back. Had it been two thousand, his fidelity and goodness of heart deserved it all.

I was now like Lear upon the open heath, exposed to the pelting of the pitiless storm, and that, too, in the climate of the north. My brain was so excited with all that had happened to me, that I held onwards straight ahead, like a ship steering across the trackless ocean. The night was dark, and the snow stung my visage, like so many sharp bodkins. I had no particular intention of reaching any town, but, like the head long cavalier, with care seated behind him, was hurrying onwards, as much to conquer my mental misery by severe bodily exercise, as any other purpose. I felt it a relief when I considered that each step was bearing me away from the sound of the spirit-stirring drum, and the ear-piercing fife at Fort George.

The wind lulled for a few minutes, as I ran against a pile of moss-clad earth, or rock, which

in the darkness I had not seen. As I felt it with my hand, I suddenly recognised it as the trysting-place of my recent disastrous duel with Major Clavering. The last prolonged note of the trumpet as the tattoo finished, like the faint blast of Roland's horn, died away in the distance, as I stopped beside the fatal cairn. It seemed like the farewell of all my future hopes and prospects. It told me, in the somewhat hack-nied words of the great wonder of all time, that for ever more "my occupation was gone." "The neighing steed, the plumed troop, the pride and circumstance of glorious war," had all, I thought, in that prolonged note of the shrill trump, bidden me an eternal adieu. I shall never forget that sound,—“the knell of my departed joys.”

I shuddered as I quitted the cairn, and, notwithstanding the increasing hurricane, pushed onwards over the heath. For some time I continued to face the wind and snow, which at times threatened to stop my breathing with its violence. If I had an intent of going towards any sort of destination, I believe my wild thoughts touched upon Aberdeen. I had a sort of half made up determination to touch there

in my way to England. Though what I meant to do in England, or why I should go there at all, it would have puzzled me to say. The idea of seeking my father, or even letting him hear from me, was so completely opposite to my ideas and feelings, that I would have been torn with wild horses rather than either have appeared before him, or written to him. Friends, I had none that I could think of applying to, and I seemed to myself a miserable, dejected, degraded outcast.

“Destruction fang mankind !” said I. “Earth yield me roots.

Timon will to the woods, where he shall find
The unkindest beast less cruel than mankind.”

The howling blast was now answered by a roaring sound. I had walked for some hours, and in the dark, deviated from the straight line. I was brought to a stand by the wild waters which washed the coast of that part of Scotland.

I paused to consider, for the first time since I started, what my intentions were, and whither I was bound. A night walk to one of my iron

frame was nothing ; but still, to be cast away in this howling wilderness, on such a night as this, was something dangerous. That, however, I cared not a rush about ; but as the severe cold had gradually penetrated to my heart, it had somewhat cooled my feelings, and reflection came to aid me. I sat down in the snow, and listened to the heavy and monotonous dash of the waves at my very feet. So lost was I in my cogitations, that I felt myself rapidly falling into a sound sleep. In a moment, I remembered that to sleep was to die. The love of life is as singular as it is strong. Why I should have wished to prolong so unfortunate a life I know not ; but I successfully combated the drowsy feeling, started up, and, turning my back upon the sea, once more at a venture wandered over the waste.

The snow had now, in some places, drifted so deeply, that I made but little way, and the exertion of walking kept me warm. It mattered not which way I went, as I felt confident I should obtain no shelter for that night. All I could do was, by moving onwards during this long and dark night, to keep myself alive.

Silently and laboriously, therefore, I wended on. Hour after hour found me plunging into some deep wreath of snow, and re-threading my steps out of it again. No sounds met my ear, but the rushing winds, and the deep cry of the bog bittern.

At length to my joy, yes, I actually felt joyful, when I beheld the first faint streaks of the breaking day. "Great evils (says Shakspeare) medicine the less." From confinement to my room, whilst under arrest, this long and laborious exertion had wearied me. I felt now chilled to death too; the cold struck more intensely to my feelings just at this time, than it had done at any other part of the night. As the light became brighter, I looked around me to see where I was, all was enveloped in one white winding sheet, a dreary inhospitable waste.

There was nothing for it but to proceed. It was still so early, that I had slight chance of meeting even a shepherd; and the wind was so violent, and the snow so deep, that it was a service of danger, even for the hardy hill-men to adventure too far, when the storm was at its height.

The snow had now, for the moment, abated,

and day having quite broke, I looked out in every direction in the hope of spying some cottage. Nothing, however was to be seen ; no hut, no tree, no shelter of any sort or kind, not even a bird ! I had wandered amongst the hills, and was completely cast away. Weary, and sick for want of food, I became almost unable to proceed. The labour of walking in the deep snow was so great, that it took me half-an-hour to gain a hundred yards to the front. At length, I heard far, far away, the bark of a dog. It came fitfully upon the piercing blast ; it was evidently miles away, yet I turned towards it as the tempest-tossed barque turns at the signal gun. Steep hills, and ravines filled with drifted snow, lay between me and the assistance I sought. I felt that to gain it was hopeless. It was doubtless some shepherds trying to recover their buried sheep ; they would probably be away before I could reach them. Still I made great efforts, and struggled through more than one deep drift. At length I felt myself failing ; as I became more and more faint, a feeling of horror and something like the approach of death seized me. I felt alarmed at the thought of dying in the open heath, alone, miser-

ably, with no soul to look upon me as I lay. The thought unnerved me. The solitude of the place was startling ; my legs failed me, my brain whirled round, and I fell senseless upon the ground.

How long I remained thus embedded in the snow, I know not ; but when returning to life, I opened my eyes, and partially regained my senses, I felt myself rather roughly handled by several persons, who had laid me before a roaring turf fire, and with might and main were rubbing my body and limbs with salt.

As I recovered under the operation, I raised myself to look around me and at my tormentors, and felt not a little surprised at the scene which presented itself.

In the first place I was stark naked, surrounded by several females, of all ages, sizes, and shapes, from fourteen, to fourscore and upwards. A young and buxom lass had hold of one of my legs, which she chafed with might and main ; an old and blear-eyed crone was in possession of another, one or two others were scrubbing my arms and chest, and one old wife, who was seated upon a stool and supporting my head

in her lap, ever and anon poured a few drops of full-proof whiskey (their universal panacea) down my throat.

The whole affair was managed and gone through, as if it was an every-day occurrence with them. There was no mock modesty with either young or old; they had received my insensible carcase from their shepherd fathers and brothers, who had found me lying stiff in the snow, as they searched for their scattered flock, had proceeded to strip, and baste, and roast me before the fire, just the same as if I had been one of their own kith and kin, or a frozen pig, or frost-bitten infant.

As soon as they perceived that I was conscious of my unclad and primitive state, they threw an old scarf over my body, and assisting me up, placed me in a sort of dark oven-like opening, which served half the family as a sleeping place. There I lay snug and warm, and except that I was stung and tormented with whole myriads of fleas, might have felt tolerably comfortable.

My kind and hospitable entertainers, now busied themselves in preparing a mess of hot

brose, which they obliged me to wash down my throat with large draughts of milk. In fact, they tended me as though I had been one of their nearest and dearest kindred.

As I lay at leisure in this warm berth, I contemplated the curiosities of the hut I had been brought into. It was a low turf built dwelling, erected against the side of a small hillock. The smoke of the ever-burning peat escaped partially through a hole in the roof, the remainder curled in huge volumes around the interior, making the room so hot and oppressive, that none but these hardy mountaineers could have thriven in such a reeking kiln.

The females, old and young, were for the most part, seated on low stools or broken chairs, and crouching over the peat reek, apparently employed in watching an iron skillet, large enough almost to have served for the witches' cauldron; every now and then one of the younger lasses, at a hint from some of the crones, would start up, heave open the door, a feat (from the violence of the wind) requiring all her strength, and take a look out into the wilderness.

There was hardly anything in the shape of furniture in the apartment, which did not seem encrusted with the smoke and soot of half a century. Three or four children lay upon a collection of sheep-skins in one corner, and Crummie, their cow, quietly chewed the cud in another. There was also a small square portion at the opposite end of the hut to where I was deposited in my berth, which was partially partitioned off, forming a sort of inner room.

As I lay observing this specimen of a shepherd's home, I began to wonder what had become of my habiliments, and whether I should ever again be permitted to wear my nether garments, which had contained in the depths of their pockets the small stock of cash remaining to me in the world, the trifling hundred pounds I had brought with me from Fort George. Alas! how little did I then know of Highland honesty, and how much less did my injurious suspicions entitle me to the Highland welcome I had so lately experienced.

As soon as I felt myself somewhat restored, I determined to rise; and after thanking the very handsome specimen of a Highland peasant lass who had been attending upon me, and

performing the office of nurse, I begged for my habiliments. She brought them to me instantly, and drawing a dilapidated sort of curtain, left me to equip myself.

When I turned out of my crib, however, and attempted to walk towards the assembled party, with the assistance of my bare legged and short-skirted attendant, I found myself quite unequal to the task. My brain whirled, my limbs again seemed unable to support me, and I was fain once more to recline upon my couch. In fact, I felt so exceedingly unwell, that I was compelled to lie where I was, from utter inability to rise. In short, the violent beating of my pulse, the scorching heat which burned me up, and the agony of my head, shewed me that I was likely to have a violent fever. I was not mistaken, but grew worse and worse towards nightfall, and before the next morning, delirium coming on, I lay in considerable danger for some days.

All I remember of that day, was the return of the shepherds towards nightfall, and the bustle consequent upon their supper being served to them. They gave up their rude couch to the invalid, and I was tended by one or two of the

females during that night, whilst the remainder of the family disposed themselves to rest in different parts of the hovel. In short, I lay dangerously ill for more than a fortnight in the shepherd's hut, and during that time was nursed and tended by these hospitable Highlanders with the greatest care and kindness, and I remained their debtor for a life twice saved.

When sufficiently recovered, I used to take gentle exercise. On these occasions I was accompanied by my unsophisticated and gentle nurse, the girl who had from first to last been my principal attendant. She was a dark-haired girl of about seventeen. Strong and athletic in make, her figure was perfect; and had she been clad in a full suit of armour, which she would have been quite equal to the weight of, she would have looked a perfect Joan of Arc.

The Highland females have been generally noted by the English, for irregular features, and cheeks as red as their top-knots, awkward ungainly figures, great splay feet, and hands big enough for a conjuror to hide the pack under. A sort of female Dugald creturs. Such is not, however, altogether the case, as many of

the lower orders of Scottish females are patterns of rustic beauty, and albeit sometimes rather in the Rubens' style, yet their Amazonian forms are perfect.

Euphemia Mc Tavish, the eldest daughter of the shepherd under whose roof I had thus been sheltered, was quite a rose in the wilderness. The colours on her cheek were even more beautiful than the hues of the flowers of the garden. Her features were somewhat large, but beautifully formed, with eyes like the beads in a wax doll, teeth perfectly faultless, and hair which, by one shake when unconfined, would, I should think, have covered her whole body, *à la Magdalène*. Her figure, I have said, was rather of the largest, but then it was perfectly splendid in its way; and had she been clad in fashionable silks and satins, and wafted for promenade to the west end of the town, she would have created quite a sensation amongst the dandies and loungers on the Regent Street promenade.

Inured to the biting winds of the hills, and frequently for whole days helping her father and other relatives to look after their flocks, the stately walk of this child of nature, with head

thrown back, and upright form, was what few girls, who had undergone the training both of the drill serjeant and the fashionable dancing-master, could have approached, even in imitation.

With this beautiful shepherdess, then, whom I named Marsala, I wandered about for the first few days after my illness. She spoke in a dialect so broad, that at first I could scarcely understand her, but after a few days' companionship, I began to comprehend her northern accent, and she to listen more profitably to the more refined and scholarly talk of the Englisher.

The shepherd and his family, which consisted of three generations, had made every effort to render their residence as comfortable to me as their means would allow. The small closet-like apartment, in their spacious bothie, or cottage, had been given up for my peculiar use, and two old crones, with Euphemia, had been sent to lodge with the married son, whose cot was half a mile up the glen, so that I was tolerably comfortable, and, considering the situation to which I was reduced, almost happy. Indeed, the change of life was so great, living thus

amidst the storm and the tempest, nursed to sleep by the roaring winds at night, and awoke again by the howling blast in the morning, that perhaps no other situation could have so effectually banished my cares from my remembrance. In short, I gradually became, as it were, one of the family; and, like Alfred in the neat-herd's cottage, was often to be found watching, that the oatmeal bannock did not burn over the peat fire.

The whole family, indeed, became attached to me; and in the long and dreary winter nights, as we sat around the glowing turf, they would listen to the tales, stories, and songs I sought to amuse them with, in the most extraordinary state of wonderment and admiration.

On these occasions the eccentric Euphemia would nestle herself down on the floor beside me, and gaze up into my face with the delight of a child of three years old; she had constituted herself my servant and nurse, and had no more idea of any impropriety in following me wherever I went, like a pet spaniel, than a wild Indian would.

As to the rest of the family, innocent in thought and deed, they were well pleased to see

their children, one and all, pay attention to the English officer, and anticipate all his wants. He was sick, sorry, and homeless, and that was a sufficient reason that they ought to shelter and treat him with care and kindness.

"I must be thinking soon of leaving you, Donald," said I, one evening, when beginning to feel myself growing strong enough to travel. I considered I ought no longer to inconvenience these generous peasants with my company. "I must be soon now leaving you," said I.

"Hout tout," returned Donald, "fat de'il's the mon talking of? Leave us, quotha! what for leave us, mon? Ye'll no think o't, I hope, till the snow's clean awa."

"Why, my good fellow," said I, "I cannot think of staying a day after I'm fit for travel. I've burthened you too long already."

"Aweel, aweel, mon," returned the shepherd, "dinna ye fash yer sel about the burthen o't. When we wish ye awa, ye'll ken it soon eneuch, I'se warrant ye. An ye talk any more about that I'se tell ye, I'm sorry we ever picked ye up from the snow. Ye'll no get away from this quite so easily, as I can tell you."

"What, then," said I, "do you mean to keep me here all winter, Donald?"

"Hout ay! winter, autumn, summer, and a', if ye like to stop amang us, all yer life if ye'll stay wie' us. Troth, but we'll make a shepherd o' ye. Ye say you've no friends in your own land, and the red coats ha'e turned their backs upon ye, what for no stop amang us? I like ye, mon: yer the only Englisher I ever was acquaint wi', and I like ye much. The fule bodies of English wha have come away to shoot with the laird at the castle, I did na muckle care for ava; they were o'er braw for me. But ye're clean another guess sort o' a body, and I think there's the making o' a gude hill mon in ye, when ye get strang. Ay, ay, we'll mak a right down shepherd o' ye yet."

"But, my good Donald," said I, "you put it out of my power to stop, till the weather breaks up even, because you will not take any remuneration for my bed, board, and education."

"Dinna mention it, lad, again," said Donald, sharply; "we don't do the like o'that here. You've gi'en the gude wife a braw gow chain,

fit for a born duchess ; and the lass Phœrne too, has gotten rings from ye, enough to tocher her, when she's minded to wed."

It was thus those hospitable people treated me, and therefore, finding my company not disagreeable to them, but that they actually wished me to stay, the novelty of the situation too, rather helping me to forget my late misfortunes, I resolved, whilst the weather continued so untoward, to shelter myself under their humble roof.

Now that I was becoming stronger, however I loved to penetrate into the glens and fastnesses around, and explore their solitudes, just at this time more congenial to my frame of mind than any other scene to which I could have been introduced. At other times I spent my time in rambling with the handsome Euphemia, when the weather permitted, listening to her artless conversation, and telling her of the wonders of the world abroad, as much amused at her childish astonishment as she was at the marvels I related her.

The weather had somewhat changed, whilst I had thus taken refuge with this family. To incessant snow, had succeeded tremendous

rains. The rivulets and burns, which, with gentle murmur, were wont to glide through the waste, or leap down the glens and gulleys, were now swollen into little torrents, and in many places in the flats, where they had become dammed up, had accumulated into tiny lakes.

Euphemia, with her unshod feet, a shepherd's maud, thrown scarfwise, across her snowy bosom, a remnant of plaid thrown over her head in place of bonnet, and her tartan petticoat, a world too short for her well-grown limbs, was often now by her sire's command on the hills from daybreak until near nightfall. Sometimes, over night, she would make me promise to find her out, and tell me where she thought it most likely I should fall in with her. Occasionally I kept my word, and spent hours in chatting to her, and listening to her somewhat original conversation. To some her manners might have appeared bold, but her perfect innocence threw so great a charm over every thing she said or did, that it was impossible to quarrel with this freedom.

"This, methought, is the prettiest low-born lass that ever Ran on the green sward. Nothing she does, or seems, But smacks of something greater than herself."

CHAPTER XVI.

May never glorious sun reflex his beams
Upon the country where you make abode !
But darkness, and the gloomy shade of death
Environ you, till mischief and despair
Drive you to break your neck, or hang yourself.

Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.

SHAKSPERE.

ONE morning I had accompanied Euphemia in her peregrinations and rounds upon the hills. It was a raw and gusty day, and after driving some of the stragglers from the swamps and morasses they had straggled into, we descended the mountains, and entered the strath along which our road lay, towards home.

Euphemia was still attending to her duties, with her colly dog at her side, as I threw myself, something wearied, upon a heathery bank, and lay and watched her. Wending her way

along the side of a hill, she endeavoured to drive away some of the sheep she saw in dangerous proximity to the still increasing waters. I had never felt my admiration so great for my fair companion as at this moment. Hitherto I had looked upon her as a beautiful child, and though certainly a fine grown child, yet so infantine in manner, and although extremely talented, so untaught and ignorant of the ways even of persons in her own sphere, that except as a beautiful specimen of rustic loveliness, I had hardly thought about her.

As I watched her now, however, standing erect upon a pinnacle of rock, calling to her dog, and directing his movements after a stray sheep, the wind too blowing her tartans, and her beautiful figure displayed as perfectly as the drapery clings to and makes more lovely the rounded limbs of a statue; as I watched her thus reclaiming some of the luxuriant brown hair which had escaped from the fillet which usually bound it, I thought I had never before seen a more commanding and exquisite form. Unconsciously, I began to look upon her with different feelings to those with which I had hitherto regarded her.

"How happy (methought) ought the man to be, whose ambition prompted him no further than to wear out life amidst these torrents and glens, dreading no enemy, 'but winter and rough weather,' his riches consisting in his flock, and his companion such a creature as this lovely Euphemia M'Tavish. Ah!" said I, "it were, indeed, the happier life,

To be no better than a homely swain.
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,
And carve out dials quaintly point by point.
So many hours must I tend my flock,
So many hours must I take my rest,
So many hours must I contemplate,
So many hours must I sport myself,
So many days my ewes have been with young,
So many weeks ere the poor fools will yearn,
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece.
So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.

"Yes," continued I, as Euphemia, after successfully extricating her sheep, bounded to the spot and threw herself panting and out of breath by my side, where she lay, her cheek upon her hand listening with the greatest attention, and eyes wide open in wonder and admiration

at my rhapsody. "Ah! my Euphemia!" said I, as I patted her cheek,

What a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery."

The buoyant spirits of my shepherdess companion were always quieted when I commenced any of my Shaksperian rhapsodies. She was extremely apt, and the melody of the tragic rhyme pleased her. Like sweet music, it saddened her spirit, and if she did not understand all she heard, perhaps she did not like it the less for that. At the present time she lay with her bright eyes gazing intently up in my face, and an expression of so much melancholy in her countenance, that I finished my quotation abruptly, and was about to take the hand which lay upon the neck of the faithful dog, who was her constant companion. She anticipated me, however, seized upon my offered hand, and carrying it to her mouth, covered it with kisses.

This was the first announcement to me that

the artless shepherdess entertained any other feelings towards the careless idler who had helped to pass away the time by sauntering at her side, than those of common friendship, and I felt startled and angry with myself at the announcement.

"Euphemia," said I, "how is this? you weep, my pretty maiden? 'Tis the first time I ever saw tears visit those laughing eyes. What ails thee?"

For some time she continued silent, and hid her face in her hands. I drew her towards me, and as I kissed away the tears in her eye, coaxed her to tell me in express terms that which I now too well knew.

"Heed me not," said she, "I'm but a silly bairn, and weep at what I suld be glad of. I weep because ye're now recovered from your illness."

"Why do you weep for that, Euphemia?" said I.

"Because," she returned, "now you're weel, you'll soon be leaving Glen Orchis never to return. I shall never again find one who can sing to me the songs you have sung, or say

such words as you have spoken. Oh, don't leave our hills for the southern land, where, ye say, ye hae no friends. Stay with me, and I'll be your sister, indeed; indeed I loe ye far better than any sister ye hae in the lowlands."

As I gazed upon the announcer of her own feelings towards me, and regarded her exquisite face and form, thus thrown in my way, far far away amongst the lonely and silent mountains, with no witnesses to our loves, but perhaps the antlered monarch of the waste couching in his bed of fern, my heart was touched.

"Euphemia," said I, "you might have had cause to hate me more than you can possibly love me. I did intend to leave Glen Orchis, but it was before I knew any one in it entertained for me other sentiments but those of friendship. You say truly, when you say I have nothing in the south. I have even worse than nothing, for I am an outcast, with a brand set upon me. I am a disgraced and broken man, without purse, profession, or prospect. For one minute only I have hesitated whether I should leave you at this spot for ever, or, for ever remaining unknown and forgotten by my kindred,

and with thee for my companion, wear out my life amongst these hills. It is past, Euphemia, firm and irrevocable is my resolution. Thou art mine own, my beautiful. I have still enough left to suit me all points for a shepherd swain. We will buy sheep, take a cot somewhere near at hand, and part no more. The hand you have kissed, my Euphemia, is dyed with the blood of a fellow creature. By the laws of God and man it stands condemned. Such as it is however, I offer it to thee. But hold off, my Phœmia," said I, as I kissed her forehead, and extricated myself from the embrace she answered me with. "I am a hot-headed and exceedingly inconsiderate youth. Not all the snows upon the frozen ridges of the Grampians yonder, could cool down the fire thy beauty and love hath raised. The wolf is in the fold, lass, and, 'till Holy Church incorporate two in one,' as good Friar Laurence says, we'll have no more pastorals, no more hill-side rambles. When I look upon thee, I need not wonder that 'a sceptre's heir thus affected a sheep-hook.'"

I arose, as I spoke, to proceed towards our

home. The rains, I have said, had been both violent and of long continuance. For many days there had been no cessation in their fall. On this day, however, the weather had been somewhat fairer, and had allowed of our loitering longer than usual in our ramble. We had rested upon the side of a small hillock. The rivulet which wound half around it in its every-day course, was now a perfect torrent, and completely environed us. Without any perceptible cause, within the last hour, the waters on every side had swollen, and were rushing and whirling in almost every direction through the strath we had descended to. The colly-dog, as if conscious of our situation, threw his head in the air, and uttered a long-drawn howl. The first thought of Euphemia was for the safety of her sheep. In the next glance she threw around her, she saw reason to fear for mine and her own escape.

While we stood on a little hillock, almost petrified with astonishment, the waters, foaming and whirling in a hundred directions had evidently risen around us. There was no time for deliberation. Euphemia grasped me by the hand, and pointed to a bridge which

crossed the streamlet about a quarter of a mile from us. It was one of those ancient structures frequently to be seen amongst the hills, an old grey-looking narrow bridge, which had perhaps witnessed the march of Bruce's soldiers, and since then had aided the Covenanters, and hill-folk in their gatherings and contentions. Its very look spoke of battle, flight and pursuit; a grey and moss-clad remnant of other days, bleaching in the solitude of the moors, like the pyramid in the Desert.

The banks, where it was thrown across, were higher than elsewhere, and the rivulet consequently deeper. Could we gain that bridge, we might easily escape along the side of the hill on its other side. I seized Euphemia by the hand, and we turned and descended the hillock into the waters where they were shallowest. They were in so much commotion that the task required our utmost care lest we should be lifted from our feet in the attempt. Once or twice we were nearly whirled round by its force. The dog was carried, spite of all his efforts, far away from us before he could get footing upon a dry spot, with at least twenty torrents between him and his mistress. Him we never saw again.

With my companion fast clutched by one arm around the waist, I reached the heather on the other side. We ran along it, crossed two or three more increasing streams, which seemed to dance on, as though bubbling from the earth, instead of descending from the uplands, and had nearly gained the bridge.*

It now stood isolated amongst the waters, and all around was like the sea. We were upon the stony causeway, which was somewhat higher than the moss on either hand, and consequently although under water in many places, yet if we could manage to keep it, we might still gain and cross the bridge.

Huge pine trees, sheep, and masses of thatch, apparently belonging to some cottages in the glen far away, were to be seen whirling about in the flood, as we paused to take breath, and observe more carefully our route.

"Haste ye," said Euphemia, "seize yon staff floating before us, 'twill help ye. Mark weel the white stanes beneath yer feet, and come awa."

Hand in hand we struggled on.

"I ken the causeway weel," said Euphemia.

* For an account of this extraordinary flood, read Sir Dick Lauder's work on the subject.

“Mind it turns a bittie here away. Dinna pause, for the love of heaven, for when yon trees gain the arch, the brig falls as sure as death !”

We accordingly kept our eyes now upon the causeway, a foot deep in the water which rushed past, and now upon the collection of huge pine trees which came whirling along in the current of the river towards the devoted and brave old bridge. It was a well-contested race, and likely to prove a dead heat. Sometimes the trees, (which “by the spurs had been plucked up,” and were now washed from the forest above) seemed to meet with some rocky impediment in their progress, and would labour and roll over, their huge roots and branches mounting slowly out of the torrent, like some enormous reptile in the agonies of death; then again, becoming detached, and darting downwards in the red stream, they were lost to sight; till at length, spite of our efforts, they reached the bridge before us. I watched the structure, as the engineer watches his sea-built tower when the storm howls loudest. The next moment and we had reached it.

The bridge contained two arches; both were now choked up by the accumulated trees which

lay athwart its buttresses, and as more and more were each instant added, the pressure (as Euphemia predicted) threatened the safety of the fabric. There was no time for consideration. The moment we had gained a footing upon the first stone of the bridge, the dammed up-waters rushed round its extremity with fearful violence. Hurrying on, we gained its centre. I felt it shake fearfully as we began to descend, and before we had gone half-a-dozen paces, with a dreadful crash, the entire building seemed to dissolve from beneath our feet, and the next instant, we were plunged into the roaring flood.

I had attempted to seize upon my companion at the first symptoms of the dissolution of the fabric. But she was whirled from my grasp with fearful violence, and carried out of my reach in an instant. Being a good swimmer, I arose after the first immersion, and struck out manfully.

I looked in every direction for my companion in misfortune, but for some moments in vain. Luckily the greater part of the trees were, for the first minute or so, detained by fragments of the foundations of the arches, or I must have been overwhelmed and borne beneath them. Onwards rushed the waters; a dozen whirling

pools sucking and choking on either hand. It was all I could do to avoid being drawn within their influence. As I struck out with the stream, I beheld, for one moment, the arms and hands of Euphemia above the surface, and then she disappeared for ever in an eddy towards the shore. Faithful in death, the poor girl was thus the means of saving me. Striking out with all my remaining strength towards the spot, in the hope of reaching her, I got a footing, and was enabled to gain the hill-side. The next instant, on came a mass of trees, followed by a sea of foam. Guided by their progress, I ran along the bank for some distance, in the hope of again seeing Euphemia, and plunging to her rescue. It was, however, in vain; I saw not even the hem of her garment to guide my search.

I was now alone upon the hill; the day was drawing to a close; the sky looked black and awful on all sides, and the whole country before me was inundated with the still increasing waters. It seemed as if the last day had arrived, and there was another flood toward.

So many mishaps had happened to me, that this new misfortune, and the death of my companion, seemed but a consequence of my unlucky stars.

"Yes," said I, as I stood helplessly, gazing upon the dreadful flood before me, "the scene I think is likely to end here, and 'tis best so. 'Affliction seems enamoured of my parts, and I am wedded to calamity.'" I threw myself upon the ground, determined to await my fate. "Let the floods come, and wash my swollen body into the main of waters, then, Britain, 'I'll owe thee nothing'—not even a grave."

I wept as I thought upon the miserable death of the poor Euphemia. Suddenly the remembrance of her hospitable relatives came upon me, and their likely danger. I felt unwilling to present myself before them; but the thought that they must necessarily be endangered by this roaring tempest, as I beheld the planks, beams, and fragments, together with stacks of hay, hurried onwards in the flood, obliterated all idea but that of trying to save.

Their cottage was some three miles from where I then was. It was directly on the other side of the hill. By clambering it, I might cross over, and perhaps reach it before the waters rose to its destruction, as I felt certain it stood on higher ground than that on which I lay.

Jumping up, therefore, I commenced the ascent. Clambering from crag to crag, like

some maniac just escaped from confinement, and gaining the summit, I traversed the hill tops, and descended towards the hospitable cottage.

I came, however, too late; the waters were out, and partially covered the flats below; all I saw being the remains of my late refuge. The stream swept along under the bank it was reared against, and the inhabitants had either forsaken the wreck or perished. Shocked, and struck with dread, I again turned to the hill, in order to save my own life. I seemed the last man, crawling and climbing, reptile-like, amidst the ruins of a sinful world. The love of life had returned, however, and I felt once more anxious to prolong my unhappy existence.

The rain again descended in torrents, the night came on sudden and dark, and for many hours I wandered on the mountains, waiting anxiously for the dawn to appear.

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON.

Printed by Schulze and Co., 18, Poland Street.

Princeton University Library



32101 064787995

